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## ABSTRACT

### “Plato’s theory of desire in the *Symposium* and the *Republic*”

**María Angélica Fierro**

*One of the main purposes of the Symposium is to describe the best and truest expression of Eros/ἔρως (the god/δαίμων and at the same time the affective disposition): φιλοσοφία. Eros is an intermediary δαίμων between our mortal condition and what is divine and immortal. As such he makes us spontaneously feel attracted to beauty and through our procreating in it helps us to attain in this life 'a sort of' immortality by leaving behind our productions and, together with it, a certain ownership of the good, which is universally desired. Most people only attain a second grade of vicarious immortality, either through biological procreation or, in the best case, through cultural procreation. However, those who are able to follow a philosophical way of life might be able to contemplate Beauty itself and by procreating in it produce authentic virtue, in this way attaining ownership of the good as far as is possible for a human being in this life. But at the same time, it is hinted that a more permanent, god-like, existence might be available for the philosopher after death. In the light of the Republic some issues which remain unclear in the Symposium find an articulate explanation: a) The tripartite theory of the soul explains why, although everybody desires the good, different individuals focus their love and desire in different ways (even in a destructive way as is the case of the tyrant or of Alcibiades in the Symposium). b) The programme of earlier and higher education makes clear what the levels of the erotic ascent consist in. c) The nature of the Good helps us to understand the status of Beauty itself. d) The myth of Er describes what a 'god-like', post-mortem existence for the philosopher would be like, while also simultaneously, allowing for a different sort of 'immortality', along the lines suggested by the Symposium.*



“Plato’s theory of desire in the *Symposium* and the *Republic*”

María Angélica Fierro

Thesis submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*  
at the University of Durham,

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*To everyone who has helped me to spread the wings of my desire*

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

**1. Subject. Limits:** The purpose of this thesis is to develop an interpretation of Plato's theory of desire in the *Symposium* in the light of the *Republic*. I also show the parallelism between the *Symposium* and the *Lysis* regarding certain basic aspects of Plato's theory of desire. The corpus of the thesis is limited to these works of Plato, although I am aware that other dialogues could have taken into consideration. In the 'Epilogue' I briefly suggest the projections of this interpretation in other dialogues such as the *Phaedo* and, especially, in the myth of the winged soul in the *Phaedrus*.

**2. Hermeneutic position:** My interpretation presupposes a synchronic understanding of the dialogues insofar as I consider that some works give us clues to enlarge the understanding of others and vice versa. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the same things are described in all of them exactly in the same form: different dialogues redescribe similar topics in a diverse way as the context and main focus vary from one to another. Moreover, the employment of a synchronic reading does not imply that I do not accept that Plato, like any other creative thinker, might have evolved and changed in his ideas. However, the establishment of a definitive chronology of his works seems to be unlikely. In addition to this, despite some modifications in his approaches, he seems to have consistently held some fundamental views about what reality, knowledge, human beings, the universe are in their essence.

**3. Secondary bibliography and main contributions of the thesis:** Some scholars have already suggested ideas about Plato's theory of desire along the lines of the interpretation that I follow here. I acknowledge their contributions in the footnotes and hope that I have been able to add some new arguments to their suggestions. In general I will not develop discussions with authors from whom I

diverge. The reasons for my discrepancies with them will hopefully be clear from my argument.

The main contributions I have made in the thesis can be summarized as follows:

-An articulated understanding of the tripartite theory of the soul in the *Republic* is traced, especially in two respects: a) All cognitive functions are attributed to the λογιστικόν so that the contradiction of adjudicating intellectual capacities to the lower, irrational parts of the soul<sup>1</sup> is avoided. b) I try to show that the earlier education of the guardians consists in training the proper desire/s of each part of the soul. The training of the ἐπιθυμητικόν is an important part of this process.<sup>1bis</sup>

- I have tried to prove that in the *Symposium* a god-like immortality after death for the philosopher is suggested along the lines of the description of that kind of immortality given in Book 10 of the *Republic*. At the same time this god-like existence can be understood in both dialogues, by reading each of them in the light of the other, as something achievable in this life, albeit in a lesser degree and less stable form.

**4. Greek text and translations:** The Greek text is cited according to Burnet's edition. I follow Griffith's translation of the *Republic* (unless otherwise indicated), Rowe's translations of the *Symposium* and Lamb's translation of the *Lysis*. In the chapter on the *Republic* most of the time I give the Greek text and the English translation because I felt that it was necessary to render more immediately visible the meaning of passages which are often long and complex. By contrast, in the chapter on the *Symposium* in general I have preferred simply to give the Greek

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Penner (1971) and Moline (1978).

<sup>1bis</sup> Differently from Gill (1985), who considers that nothing is said about the education of the appetitive part in the *Republic*.

text (unless a passage is closely discussed as in the case of *Symp.* 212a2-7) as the citations are usually very short and to introduce the translation would only interrupt the flow of the argument.

**5. Importance and projections of Plato's theory of desire:** Plato gave a description of desire such that for first time ἔρως, normally felt simply as an unavoidable but tyrannical force which governs those who fall in love, became a kind of force which configures our whole life and perhaps a possible divine expression of what we are. The productiveness of this idea in Western culture has been perennial and enormous. Aristotle's conception of the Prime Mover<sup>2</sup> is rooted in this conception of Platonic Love. Plato's idea of love is also one of the central concepts of the Platonic philosophy developed by the Neoplatonists. The consideration of Eros as one of the names of Gods in the *Treatise on the Divine names* by Pseudo-Dionysius is a result of these Neoplatonic remakings. Moreover, the Christian conception of love -ἀγάπη- is, in a way, a reaction to this same Platonic conception of passion and love.<sup>3</sup> Some contemporary theories, like Freud's, Marcuse's, Lacan's or Foucault's<sup>4</sup> have also found inspiration from this idea of Platonic Eros. The influence of this conception of desire and love in literature has also been immeasurable from the mystic poetry of San Juan de la Cruz to Virginia Woolf (see *Night and day*). The cinema has also recreated the crucial human theme which Plato conceptualized through his theory of Eros as, for example, in *The Wings of Desire* by Wim Wenders, Visconti's *Death in Venice*, based on Thomas Mann's novel, or the whole output of Pedro Almodóvar. This thesis is a modest attempt to interrogate once again the creator of this conception of the human being as constituted by his leading desire about the nature of Eros and his effects on our lives.

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<sup>2</sup> See especially *Metaphysics*, Book Λ.

<sup>3</sup> See Nygren (1932-1939), vol. I, chapter 5 (esp. pp. 129-139).

<sup>4</sup> Foucault (1985); Marcuse (1956); Lacan (1999); Detel (1998); Le Brun (2002). For the relationship between Plato's theory of love and Freud's theory of love see Santas (1988).

αὕτη σοι, ὦ φίλε Ἔρως,  
εἰς ἡμετέραν δύναμιν ὅτι καλλίστη καὶ ἀρίστη  
δέδοται τε καὶ ἐκτέττειται παλινῳδία...  
Pl., *Phaedr.* 257a3-4

## CHAPTER I

**The theory of desire in Socrates's speech in the *Symposium*.**

**The best praise of the truest ἔρως or φιλοσοφία**

### *Abstract of argument of chapter*

*The main purpose of this chapter is to present Plato's theory of desire in the Symposium, while identifying some assertions whose real significance -I claim- needs to be filled out in the light of the Republic.*

*My understanding presupposes that Plato's conception of ἔρως is essentially developed through the character of Socrates, firstly in the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon (199c3-200c9) and then in the speech that he attributes to Diotima (201d1-212a7). Socrates' contribution is a critical-philosophical answer to what has been stated in the five previous speeches since Socrates, in contrast with the other speakers, commits himself to uttering only the truth about Eros. Given that the 'mise en scène' is festive in atmosphere, he expounds only Eros' positive aspects, the potentially destructive aspects of Love being put aside and only dramatically suggested through the testimony given by the character of Alcibiades.*

*According to the interpretation that I propose, the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon presents a description of the structure of Eros that is applicable to desire in general but is, however, focused on the description of erotic desire and especially, as it becomes clear later, of the intense desire for knowing the truth or φιλοσοφία. In this first section there is a characterization of Eros*

*-simultaneously Eros the god and erotic desire- as deficient of what he desires so that, being neither good nor beautiful, he desires the good and the beautiful.*

*Through this conversation Agathon, after being refuted, is left -along with the reader- bereft of false beliefs and so in an appropriate erotic state to start to φιλοσοφεῖν. Nevertheless, the ἔλεγχος is not only aporetic: at the same time it also provides positive assertions regarding what Eros is like, which overlap in many cases with statements about the object and subject of desire made in the Lysis.*

*The assertions made in Socrates' dialogue with Agathon give a basis to the description developed in Diotima's/Socrates' speech concerning what Eros is like and what his works are. But in this new section the argument is progressively shifted so that Eros/ἔρως is considered not just as erotic desire but as the intense desire that leads each one's life and fundamentally in the light of his/its highest possibility: to be a lover of the truth or wisdom. This is achieved through diverse devices in the construction of the argument. Thus:*

*a) Through Socrates's use of Diotima's mask the speech about Eros is fictionally attributed to a woman wise in τὰ ἐρωτικά and other things, who has contact with the divine realm, in a way similar to the way that Eros -δαίμων and φιλόσοφος- has.*

*b) Eros, being neither good nor bad nor beautiful nor ugly, is characterized as μεταξύ through a comparison with ὀρθὴ δόξα and, especially, through his inclusion in the genus of the δαίμονες, so that he turns out to be μεταξύ not just as an 'intermediate' (i.e. something in between two states and/or combining opposing features of these two states) but also, and above all, an 'intermediary' that thanks to this hybrid nature links the human sphere and the gods' domain.*

*c) In the myth of Eros' birth the previous developments -i.e. a) and b)- are brought together in order to portray Eros as φιλόσοφος: his deficient condition in relation to what is good and beautiful makes him desire to look for truth and wisdom, which only belong fully to the gods. In this way, he becomes a medium between what is mortal and human and what is immortal and divine.*



*In Diotima's section on the works of Eros some rectifications and further developments of the assertions made at a), b) and c) occur: Eros/ἔρως becomes now the intense desire for the eternal possession of the good (in which happiness consists) that dominates our whole life and has as its specific erotic form the search for immortality through procreation in beauty in order to get as near as possible to ownership of the good. Attainable immortality is by procreation (κατὰ τὸ σῶμα or κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν), given that love (in spite of his/its longing for being like the gods) is always limited and unstable, due to its deficient condition, and so the only way of enduring in our present existence and surviving after death is, in principle, by replacement or substitution. Why human beings, though all of them desire the good, look for immortality in different ways and consider different things as the good and focus of their ἔρως is left in the Symposium without explanation.*

*In the erotic ascent the lover/philosopher's steps toward increasing beauty and perfection are only sketched. If the philosopher or lover of the truth arrives at a "sudden" vision of Beauty itself -the most visible aspect of the Good-, he comes, through wisdom, as far as possible for a human being, to the eternal possession of the good, the production of true virtue and, possibly, a god-like immortality after death, suggested at 212a5-7 but not described. This access to an eternal reality is, at least in our present existence, never permanent so that Eros/ἔρως, even under such extraordinary circumstances, is not annihilated by losing his/its deficient condition, although there is a certain preservation of the wisdom acquired as well as of its effects.*

*Finally, in Alcibiades' speech a description of Eros-φίλοςσοφος is offered through the portrait of Socrates as well as an illustration of what the production of true virtue by one who has contemplated Beauty itself (i.e. Socrates) would be like. In addition to this, Alcibiades' recounting of the episodes of his love-story with Socrates shows us that for a philosopher an erotic interpersonal relationship means, far from treating the beloved as an object, precisely to lead him to the*

*position of a subject of desire and, above all, to that of a lover of the truth, if possible. At the same time Alcibiades provides an example of a talented personality unable to direct his 'currents' of desire in the right way –i.e. incapable of restraining his appetites and love for honour so that they are not ruled by the practice of philosophy or reason's love for the truth. This proves that the beneficial effects of Eros described in Diotima's speech -especially in relation to the philosopher but also regarding ordinary people who direct their ἔρως toward biological or cultural procreation- are the best but not the only possible ways in which desire can guide and channel a human life.*

*The main questions which remain open and can be answered in the light of the Republic are: a) why, although all human beings desire the good, the erotic currents can be organized in each human being in different ways such that they are directed to diverse goals and even away from the real good; b) what the steps of the erotic ascent would more specifically refer to; c) what god-like immortality attainable by the philosopher after death would actually consist in.*

# 1. Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*: a true and best report about Eros<sup>5</sup>

The *Symposium* is basically constructed as a report of some περὶ τῶν ἐρωτικῶν λόγοι (see 172b2) pronounced on the occasion of Agathon's victory with his first tragedy (173a5-7). These speeches about Eros are narrated to a group of friends and, at the same time, to us, the readers, by Apollodorus, who has received the report from Aristodemus, one of those present at that famous party and a fanatic in relation to anything concerning Socrates (173b1-6). Their content can be briefly summarized as follows: Phaedrus makes a speech on the possibilities of moral improvement through an erotic relationship. Pausanias describes "terrestrial" heterosexual love in contrast to the "heavenly" homosexual love that brings virtue and intellectual progress. Eryximachus gives a medical and cosmic interpretation of Eros based on the attraction of opposite things. Aristophanes interprets passion as a search for a lost unity through sexual intercourse. Agathon praises the beautiful and young god Eros<sup>6</sup> who presides over love affairs and poetry. After an ἔλεγχος of Agathon, Socrates reports Diotima's speech on τὰ ἐρωτικά, which culminates in a sketch of the erotic ascent to Beauty itself, if this were to be possible for anybody. Finally, Alcibiades gives an encomium in which he confesses his frustrated passion for Socrates and offers an unforgettable portrait of Eros-the philosopher, through the description of his friend.

Whatever value or meaning the five speeches previous to Socrates' may have in relation to the overall structure of the dialogue, it is reasonable to suppose that they are all liable to the criticism made by Socrates at the end of Agathon's speech, i.e. they imply a belief that the thing to do when making an ἐγκώμιον is:

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<sup>5</sup> I follow Rowe's *Symposium* translation from now on. The lines of the passages are given according to Burnet's edition of the Greek text.

<sup>6</sup> In the *Symposium* and particularly in Socrates' speech ἔρως refers to both: Eros the god and ἔρως as erotic desire (see below 2.2.1. **Eros as the god and erotic desire**, pp. 29 ff.). Except when necessary to distinguish one or the other I will use just 'Eros'.

...τὸ ὥς μέγιστα ἀνατιθέναι τῷ πράγματι καὶ ὥς κάλλιστα, ἐάν τε  
 ἦ οὕτως ἔχοντα ἐάν τε μή· εἰ δὲ ψευδῇ, οὐδὲν ἄρ' ἦν πρᾶγμα.  
 (198d8-e2)

In other words, Socrates' disagreement with what has been said in relation to Eros up to that point expresses Plato's general philosophical criticism of uncritical, often false opinions. Philosophy as represented by Socrates/Diotima means to show how things really are in contrast with sophists and other 'wise' men of the time who are not interested in searching for the truth but only give semblances of it.<sup>7</sup>

The acclaimed poet Agathon, who has just -so Socrates hyperbolically reflects- been celebrated by thirty thousand Athenians (175e2-6) and, at that very moment, by a selected intellectual group of friends (198a1-3; see also 174a6-7 and 194b6-8) is, being an imitator of Gorgias (198c1-3), the most conspicuous example of this uncritical attitude of sophistry.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Socrates, being a philosopher or

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<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, this does not imply that a plain rejection of all the content of the speeches previous to Socrates'/Diotima's is here meant: as shown later (see. p. 66), the previous speeches, though not reporting the truth but being just "images of it", are part of the "Lesser Mysteries" as they are a first attempt to procreate in beauty in order to possess for ever the good universally desired.

<sup>8</sup> On this point see Robin (1951), pp. xxx; lxiv. Similarly Wipperfurth (1965), p. 124.

<sup>8bis</sup> Socrates's expertise in erotic matters would not be any different from his usual claim of not knowing anything except his own state of ignorance, as, according to *Symp.* 204a, Eros is above all φιλοσοφία, i.e. awareness of one's ignorance and so something between ignorance and knowledge. On this point see Waterfield (1994), p. 85 who also refers to *Lys.* 218b.

lover of wisdom, is committed to only saying the truth about Eros (198d1, 199b1). His enthusiastic agreement to Eryximachus' proposal of giving speeches in praise of Eros has been motivated by his "not to knowing about anything except things erotic" (177d7-8; see also 193e4-5, 198d1-2; see also *Lys.* 204b8-c2)<sup>8bis</sup>. Thus, we can suppose that Socrates' capacity to give a true report about Eros is based in this expertise in τὰ ἐρωτικά.

Socrates' commitment to reporting the truth about Eros has been often been pointed out. However, it has been less noticed that he does not intend to say *all* kinds of true things about Eros but only to refer to Love's most beautiful aspects:

ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ὑπ' ἀβελτερίας<sup>9</sup> ὥμην δεῖν τάληθῇ λέγειν περὶ ἐκάστου τοῦ ἐγκωμιαζομένου, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὑπάρχειν, ἐξ αὐτῶν δὲ τούτων τὰ κάλλιστα ἐκλεγομένους ὡς εὐπρεπέστατα τιθέναι (198d3-8)

It would be wrong to suppose that Plato's omission of Eros' negative aspects here means that he only recognizes his uplifting expressions and underestimates or ignores the fact that sometimes Love can also be so ruinous that, for example, it may mislead even the just man and lead him into injustice and self-destruction (Sophocles, *Antigone* 781-801). Insofar as a ruinous Eros is illustrated through the portrait of the lover of Socrates' first speech in the *Phaedrus*, the different kinds of unjust men of *Republic* 8 and 9, especially the sketch of the tyrant dominated by a devastating ἔρωσ and also here in the *Symposium* through the character of Alcibiades, it is clear that Plato was well aware of love's potentially destructive

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<sup>9</sup> ὑπ' ἀβελτερίας is ironical : Socrates knows very well from the beginning that none of the speakers were interested in telling the truth as he is.

effects.<sup>10</sup> The way in which this omission in Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* has to be understood seems to be the following: in the context of a celebration where a praise or ἐγκώμιον is the proposal, Socrates considers it appropriate to say the truth about Eros but, at the same time, *only* what is best and most beautiful about it. So on this occasion Socrates concentrates on revealing the fact that our lives are dominated by passion or Eros and that this opens up to us the chance of being ruled by the best and most authentic form of passion: the love for the truth or φιλοσοφία, if we could be "appropriately led in τὰ ἐρωτικά"; or, if this is not possible, at least as a second best, to have the leading passion of our life as well orientated as possible (to biological procreation<sup>11</sup> or, better, to cultural creativity).

## **2. The dialogue between Socrates and Agathon (199c3-201c9): ἔλεγχος and desire for the truth; the structure of desire.**

Socrates's discourse about Eros is preceded by a refutation by Socrates of Agathon (199c3-201c9). Here I try to show that this ἔλεγχος has two aims: a) The interlocutor (and with him the reader) is left by it in a lacking state of mind similar to the lacking aspect of Eros (which is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of φιλοσοφεῖν). b) Alongside the destruction of Agathon's views about

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<sup>10</sup> In the *Symposium* the character of Alcibiades seems to be the one that carries the weight of representing a passionate individual whose ἔρωσ has unfortunately been misdirected and will lead him to his self-destruction.

<sup>11</sup> An individual who focuses his/her ἔρωσ on biological procreation does not, of course, attain real virtue or even "images" of it. Nevertheless, when biologically procreating, his/her sexual appetites are at least orientated in a positive, productive way (from Plato's point of view), in contrast to the situation in which sex is merely recreational. In other words, sexual appetites orientated to biological procreation would be a first, humble sign of our desire for immortality and of procreation in beauty, and being in this sense good.

Eros, in this section of the *Symposium*, a positive exposition of the structure of Eros is also provided.

### **2.1. Refutation: emptiness through release from false beliefs and the generation of desire for knowledge**

The dialogue between Socrates and Agathon at 199c3-201c9 fits into the structure of ἔλεγχος<sup>12</sup> of the so called aporetic dialogues, so that Agathon's thesis "Eros is beautiful" (195a7; 197c1-2) turns out to be refuted at the end of it.

It has been pointed out that the bizarre and complex narrative structure of the *Symposium* as a whole corresponds with Plato's conception of desire, insofar as it involves an erotic effect on the reader, provoking both emptiness and longing -constitutive characteristics of Eros- with regard to the real meaning of the text.<sup>13</sup> A similar consideration can be applied to this ἔλεγχος of Agathon by Socrates.

As will be clearly shown in the myth of Eros' birth,<sup>14</sup> emptiness -supplied by Πενία- and the skill of filling it -provided by Πόρος- are the two essential aspects of Eros-φιλόσοφος. When Agathon is refuted by Socrates, he is 'emptied' of his beliefs about Eros and so, having acquired at least one of the essential characteristics of Eros -his lacking condition-, is in a better position to φιλοσοφεῖν.

This effect of Socratic refutation -the release from the holding of false beliefs- is described in other works, such as the *Apology*,<sup>15</sup> which shows that such liberation is a condition of the awareness of one's self-ignorance that is a sort of wisdom

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<sup>12</sup> See the description of the ἔλεγχος in Vlastos (1983), 39.

<sup>13</sup> Halperin (1992).

<sup>14</sup> 203b1-204b9.

<sup>15</sup> *Apol.* 21c5-d1.

attainable for human beings.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, at *Theaet.* 150b9-c3, getting-rid of mere appearances and wrong judgements is considered a necessary step along with the ‘delivery’ of true opinions through midwifery. But in the *Symposium* there is something else: Plato seems here to bring to light the possible (but not necessary) erotic effect of the recognition of this emptiness (which is a condition for undertaking a philosophical way of life). In other words, he tries to teach Agathon what Eros is, both providing him with the basis of a conceptual understanding (see below 2.2.) and trying to generate in him with the ἔλεγχος a state resembling one of the aspects of the new born Eros of the myth (it seems that the second of these - the Πόρος-like aspect- cannot be provided by anybody but depends upon each individual).<sup>17</sup> Although Socrates tries to lead Agathon to this erotic/philosophical disposition, Agathon’s claim of ignorance (κινδυνεύω, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐδὲν εἰδέναι ὦν τότε εἶπον., 201b11-12) is just apparent. In fact at the end of the ἔλεγχος he refuses to recognise his emptiness (ἐγώ, φάναι, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοὶ οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην ἀντιλέγειν, ἀλλ’ οὕτως ἐχέτω ὡς σὺ λέγεις, 201c6-7) and does not show any desire to φιλοσοφεῖν.<sup>18</sup> This fact makes us think that Socrates has failed in his attempt to awake in Agathon the desire for wisdom. However, it is probable that Plato hoped not to fail in leading his readers through this dramatic situation to the appropriate state for the emergence of an

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<sup>16</sup> On the meaning of Socratic wisdom in the *Apology* see Stokes (1997), pp. 7-21; Irwin (1995), pp. 28-29; Woodruff (1992); Nozick (1995); Nuddler (1995); Gómez Lobo (1995).

<sup>17</sup> The erotic and active attitude of Πενία ἐπιβουλεύουσα διὰ τὴν ἀπορίαν παιδίου ποιήσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ Πόρου (203b7-8), which is reminiscent of Eros’ description as ἐπιβουλός at 203d4 and as a creative force in 206b7-8, contrasts with the passive description of Πόρος as sleeping and drunk. This seems to suggest that desire and its resources originate out of emptiness. But how/why does the impulse of satisfying this emptiness emerge from it? Plato seems to state this as a matter of fact and only explains it in mythical terms.

<sup>18</sup> In fact Agathon seems to be a good illustration of the state of ἀμαθία (204a3-7). Although he does recognise that he was wrong in what he said about Eros (201b11-12), he understands nothing except that Socrates has refuted him and won the argument (201c6-7) and so he completely misses Socrates’ point, that is, about true need to look for the truth about Eros.



erotic/philosophical attitude. In fact the substitution of Socrates for Agathon after the latter's refutation seems to be designed with this very protreptic intention: Socrates, who has described himself as an "expert" about τὰ ἐρωτικά, presents himself in the past in an 'erotic' situation similar to Agathon's and refuted by Diotima his teacher in Eros.<sup>19</sup> In this way Socrates' own example will provide what Agathon failed to provide, that is, the recognition of his emptiness -i.e. his ignorance about what Eros is- and the desire to look for the truth with his teacher's help.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2. 'Euporetic' ἔλεγχος: positive assertions on the structure of Eros/ἔρως.

The short ἔλεγχος by Socrates of Agathon does not have just the aim of refuting the young poet by leaving him in contradiction with some of his previous assertions and so, if it were possible (which is not the case), ready to φιλοσοφεῖν thanks to the recognition of his own ignorance. Similarly to what happens in the (so called) Socratic dialogues, there is a combination of the negative function of the ἔλεγχος with an exposition of positive -though maybe not definitive- conclusions,<sup>21</sup> in this case concerning the structure of desire in general and of Eros in particular.

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<sup>19</sup>This may be one of the purposes of the fictionality of Diotima. On this point see below n. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Rowe (1998), p. 168.

<sup>21</sup> In the *Euthyphro*, for example, although there is no final answer about what the pious is, we do find some positive considerations, as for example that the pious is an εἶδος that makes all pious actions pious (5c9-d7; 6d9-e6) and that it is a notion independent of theology (9e-10e8). Also in the *Laches* we get at the end at least a provisional definition of ἀνδρεία (on this point see also Guthrie (1975), p. 132): it is an ἐπιστήμη of the hopeful and fearful which is different from other particular τέχναι and from irrational reactions towards attack and defence and is part of the ἐπιστήμη of what is good and bad concerning bad, present and future things. Gómez Lobo (1989) goes further in relation to the *Crito*, the *Apology* and the *Gorgias*: he thinks that an axiomatic system of ethical principles is being developed. In *Theaet.* 150b6-c3 and *Soph.* 230b4-d4 -two of the (so called) later dialogues- the ἔλεγχος is also valued as a precondition of the

Besides the destruction of wrong beliefs about Eros produced by the ἔλεγχος, a positive doctrine about Eros is simultaneously expounded. In fact in this section of the *Symposium* Plato gives a schematic and structural description of Eros, which settles the grounds for the succeeding exposition of the theory of Eros in Socrates/Diotima's speech. This account of desire's structure can be briefly expressed in the following terms:

1. Eros is always Eros for something, i.e. it has an intentional or relational structure (199d1-199e8).<sup>22</sup>
2. If Eros loves (ἐρᾷ) something it follows that it desires (ἐπιθυμεῖ) something (200a1-4).
3. Eros always desires what it desires only in case it lacks it (200a5-b3).
4. Eros does not desire what it currently has but desires to have it and keep it in the future, i.e. it has an essentially prospective structure (200b4-200e6).
5. Eros is for the beautiful (201a2-201b3) and the good (201c1-3).
6. Eros is neither beautiful (201b4-201b12) nor good (201c4-5).

What 'Eros' refers to in these statements and what these statements mean is treated in the following sections.

### 2.2.1. ἔρως as Eros the god and as erotic desire

The statements agreed by Socrates and Agathon formally refer to Eros the god. This is the subject proposed at the beginning<sup>23</sup> and all the speakers except

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development of a learning process. In a 'middle' dialogue like *Republic*, at 538c6-539d7 there is a criticism of the ἔλεγχος though focused not on the method itself but on the use of it by the questioner with someone who is too young or by the young who superficially imitate the questioner. For all these reasons I think that Plato always valued the ἔλεγχος (differently Reeve (1992), who thinks that in his maturity Plato criticizes the destructive effects of Socrates' ἔλεγχος).

<sup>22</sup> See ch. 20 of Friedländer (1969), p. 24.

Alcibiades (including Socrates) respect this at least from a formal point of view.<sup>24</sup> In the specific case of the passage 199c-201c Agathon has just been speaking about Eros the god and Socrates, taking profit from some of Agathon's previous assumptions<sup>25</sup> and agreeing some new ones with him, leads Agathon towards a truer analysis of Eros the god.

However, the assumptions agreed here in relation to Eros the god refer also to the structure of Eros as erotic desire.

First of all, a typical Socratic question in the form "What is x?", in relation to Eros, is posed at the beginning of the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon:

...πρῶτον μὲν δέοι αὐτὸν ἐπιδειῖξαι ὁποῖός τις ἐστὶν ὁ Ἔρως, ὕστερον δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. (199c4-5)<sup>23bis</sup>

Similarly at the starting point of her exposition Diotima says that the thing to do is:

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<sup>23</sup> 177a5-e6.

<sup>23bis</sup> Here at 199c4-5 Socrates, who is mainly referring to Agathon's proposal at 195a, poses his question in an inaccurate way. According to the *Meno*, a proper formulation of the typical Socratic question would require previous knowledge of *what* X is (τί ἐστὶ) before determining what X is *like* (ὁποῖός τις ἐστὶ). He makes a more accurate formulation of the question when he starts his own speech under the mask of Diotima saying at 201d8-e2 that it is necessary to both explain τίς ἐστὶν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ ποῖός τις.

<sup>24</sup> I say "at least from a formal point of view" since it seems that most of them begin by speaking about the god but then mainly speak about the relation ἐραστήs-ἐρώμενος (Phaedrus-Pausanias-Aristophanes), or the ἐρώμενος (Agathon).

<sup>25</sup> Socrates agrees with some points made by Agathon in his speech: at 199c3-5 and 201d8-e2 he approves Agathon's methodological proposal at 195a1-5; at 201a2-5 he picks up Agathon's assertion at 197b7-c3 that the object of Eros is the beautiful (cf. Bury (1932), p. lix; Rowe (1998), p. 171).

...διελθεῖν αὐτὸν πρῶτον, τίς ἐστὶν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ ποῖός τις, ἔπειτα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.(201d8-e2)

This question could be understood, nevertheless, as only concerning Eros the god. The fact that it can also be construed as being about the essence of ἔρως is clearly established through linguistic and metalinguistic remarks made by Socrates in 199c-e.

a) In this passage Socrates says that Agathon is being asked about Eros “as if I were asking about that very thing ‘father’” (199d4) or “about a brother or a sister” “that very thing that it is” (αὐτὸ τοῦθ’ ὅπερ ἐστίν 199e3-4). The use of this latter expression means, as in other passages of Plato,<sup>26</sup> that the question is about Eros/ἔρως in general.

b) In addition to this, it is also said that this question about Eros must not be answered by reference to “a love for a mother” or “a love for a father” (199d2-4) – i.e., as I take it, with examples; in other words the object of Eros must be considered from a general point view.

c) Finally, the use of the indefinite pronoun in the question whether “Eros is love of *anything or nothing* (πότερον ἐστὶ τοιοῦτος οἷος τινος ὁ Ἔρως ἔρως, ἢ οὐδενός,)” (199d1-2) indicates again that ἔρως has to be taken in a general sense.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See τὸ ὅσιον αὐτὸ (*Euth.* 5d2), αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν (*Hi. Ma.* 289d2). ὅπερ ἐστίν underlines, alongside αὐτὸ, that the question is about essence (for a similar interpretation of this passage of the *Symposium* see Bury (1932), p. 90; Robin (1951) and Vicaire (1989), pp. 47-48 in his edition of the *Symposium* seem to indicate something similar by using capital letters in the expressions “to be Father/Mother of”). For expressions similar to ὅπερ ἐστίν see ὅτι ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν (*Hi. Ma.* 287d6), αὐτὸ ὃ ἐστὶν ἑκάστον (*Rep.* 7.532a7), ὃ ἐστὶ δεσπότης (*Parm.* 133d8).

<sup>27</sup> With respect to the importance of these points for clarifying the subject of the passage, see Robin (1951), pp. lxxiii-lxxvi.

Hence, in the dialogue of Socrates and Agathon and afterwards in Diotima's speech there are two levels of reference that work simultaneously: Eros the god and ἔρως as erotic desire in general. Plato's interest is not to differentiate these levels but to lead the fictional characters and the reader from the uncritical ἐγκώμια of the previous speakers about Eros towards the exposition of a theory of ἔρως.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.2.2. Eros intentional/relational structure

ἔρως like all desires is always "ἔρως of something":

- ὁ Ἔρως ἔρως ἐστὶν οὐδενὸς ἢ τινός;

- πάνυ μὲν οὖν ἔστιν. (199e6-7)

This means that it has an intentional structure and is, then, always addressed to something.<sup>29</sup> In other words, it is a relative term and, as such, cannot be understood independently of the relationship to its object.<sup>30</sup> Thus, this description of erotic desire as a relationship between a subject and an object prepares the distinction between subject of desire (ὁ ἐρῶν) and object of desire (ὁ ἐρώμενος) clearly made later in Diotima's speech.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> So I disagree with Reeve (1992), pp. 111-114 that Socrates is here arguing fallaciously and making an improper replacement of Agathon's anthropomorphic conception of love as a beautiful young god -as is usually portrayed by Greek artists- by a sophisticated argument about Eros to demonstrate that he is neither beautiful nor good. Socrates picks up some of Agathon's assertions (see above n. 25) and introduces some new ones in order not to make an invalid argument but to lead Agathon (and us, the readers) from an uncritical conception of Eros to a coherent and systematic description of it.

<sup>29</sup> See ch. 20 of Friedländer (1969) pp. 23-24 and Wipperfurth (1965), p. 125.

<sup>30</sup> Mignucci (1988).

<sup>31</sup> 204c1-6.

### 2.2.3. Erotic desire as a species of desire in general

Another conclusion that can be got from the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon is that “if Eros loves (ἐρᾷ) something it also desires (ἐπιθυμεῖ) it”.

Thus, at 200a2-4:

- ...πότερον ὁ Ἔρως ἐκείνου οὐ ἔστιν ἔρως, ἐπιθυμεῖ αὐτοῦ ἢ οὐ;

- πάνυ γε...

And then at 200a5-7:

- πότερον ἔχων αὐτὸ οὐ ἐπιθυμεῖ τε καὶ ἐρᾷ, εἴτα ἐπιθυμεῖ τε καὶ ἐρᾷ ἢ οὐκ ἔχων;

- οὐκ ἔχων, ὥς τὸ εἰκός...

Differently from ἐπιθυμία, ἔρως normally refers to a more intense form of desire (“Double ἐπιθυμία is ἔρως”, Prodicus B7 DK) and also to a more specific form: sexual passion.<sup>32</sup> However, these passages show that in this section Socrates uses in this section ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἐρᾶν (see passage 200a5-7 above) and also βούλεσθαι (see, for example, ἐγὼ ὑγιαίνων βούλομαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, καὶ πλουτῶν βούλομαι καὶ πλουτεῖν, καὶ ἐπιθυμῶ αὐτῶν τούτων ἃ ἔχω, 200c6-8) interchangeably. This is not because the three words mean the same (which they obviously do not) but because he is interested in the notion underlying all three -desire- and wants to apply some features of the genus desire (its relational structure, its deficient condition) to one of the species: erotic desire, which has as its standard expression sexual desire but is for Plato, above

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<sup>32</sup> ‘This word ... usually means ‘love’ in the sense which that word bears in our expressions ‘be in love (with)’ ...and ‘fall in love with...’: that is; intense desire for a particular individual as sexual partner’ Dover (1980), 1.

all, an intense passion that dominates one's life. Thus, some assertions in this section are about Eros or erotic desire but, at the same time, valid for desire in general and its other forms.<sup>33</sup> It also paves the way for Diotima's assertion at 205d1-8 where, although the reference keeps being ἔρως -erotic desire- and not desire in general, ἔρως does not mean sexual desire but the passion that leads each one's life, especially the overall desire for the truth or φιλοσοφία.

#### 2.2.4. Eros' lacking condition

Eros does not have the object of desire to which it is addressed (that is why it desires it) and so always has a lacking condition:

- πότερον ἔχων αὐτὸ οὐ ἐπιθυμεῖ τε καὶ ἔρᾳ, εἴτα ἐπιθυμεῖ τε καὶ ἔρᾳ, ἢ οὐκ ἔχων;

- οὐκ ἔχων ὥς τὸ εἰκός γε, φάναι.

- σκόπει δὴ...ἀντὶ τοῦ εἰκότος εἰ ἀνάγκη οὕτως, τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν ἐπιθυμεῖν οὐ ἐνδεές ἐστιν, ἢ μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ἐνδεές ᾖ;

(200 a5-b1)

This aspect of Eros, which will be reflected later in the Πενία-like features of Eros in the myth, implies that there is no desire, no passion, if there is not a deficient condition. In other words, desire is not possible in completeness, in which nothing is lacking.

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<sup>33</sup> Bury (1932), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii, Wipperfurth (1965), p. 125 and Dover (1980), pp. 2, 134, 135, 145 think that in this passage there is an equation ἔρως-ἐπιθυμία. Differently Hyland (1968), *passim* thinks that this passage partially reflects a hierarchy of desires that Plato intends to settle: irrational desire (ἐπιθυμία), more rational desires (ἔρως and βούλεσθαι), the most rational desire (φιλία). Cummins (1981), *passim* criticizes Hyland's arguments. On this point see also Halperin (1985).

### 2.2.5. Prospective structure of desire

In 200b-d it is established that what we call desire for things that we possess in the present -such as strength, health, wealth, etc.- means, in fact, the desire for keeping these things in the future:

σκόπει οὖν, ὅταν τοῦτο λέγῃς, ὅτι ἐπιθυμῶ τῶν παρόντων, εἰ ἄλλο τι λέγεις ἢ τόδε, ὅτι βούλομαι τὰ νῦν παρόντα καὶ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον παρεῖναι (200d3-6)

This allows a consideration of Eros' lacking condition from a temporal point of view. While in the present there may be<sup>34</sup> actual possession of certain things -either they are desired or not (εἴτε βούλει εἴτε μή, 200d2-3)- the continued possession of these things in the future is still missing and so desired:

-οὐκοῦν τοῦτο γ' ἐστὶν ἐκείνου ἐρᾶν, ὃ οὐπω ἔτοιμον αὐτῷ ἐστὶν οὐδὲ ἔχει, τὸ εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον ταῦτα εἶναι αὐτῷ σωζόμενα καὶ παρόντα; (200d8-10)

This prospective structure<sup>35</sup> of Eros means that, even if fulfilled in the present, it keeps being deficient and without total guarantee of satisfaction in the future. This gives an important foundation for one of the points developed later in Diotima's speech.<sup>36</sup> Eros' permanent and necessary process of replacement, in order to get a vicarious immortality and so a partial satisfaction of the desire for an eternal possession of the good, and the elusiveness of his object are coherent with the reflection made at 200 b-d in relation to the limitation that the inscription in time

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<sup>34</sup> I say "may be" because, if the present is an imaginary point between the past and future, as *Parm.* 152b4-e3 suggests, is a *real* possession of the object of desire possible, even in the present?

<sup>35</sup> Wipern (1965), p. 125 also refers to an εἰς- τὸν- ἔπειτα- χρόνον perspective of Eros.

<sup>36</sup> See below pp. 44 ff..



imposes upon Eros' possession of his object of desire, which, even when possessed in the present, might still be absent, lacking and desired in the future:

και οὗτος ἄρα καὶ ἄλλος πᾶς ὁ ἐπιθυμῶν τοῦ μὴ ἐτοίμου ἐπιθυμεῖ  
καὶ τοῦ μὴ παρόντος, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἔχει καὶ ὁ μὴ ἔστιν αὐτὸς καὶ οὗ  
ἐνδεής ἐστι, τοιαῦτ' ἅττα ἐστιν ὧν ἡ ἐπιθυμία τε καὶ ἔρως ἐστιν;  
(200e2-5)

### 2.2.6. The object of Eros: the beautiful and the good

By picking up at 201a4-5 what Agathon has previously stated in his speech at 197b4-5:<sup>37</sup>

...τοῖς θεοῖς κατεσκευάσθη τὰ πράγματα δι' ἔρωτα καλῶν· αἰσχροῶν  
γὰρ οὐκ εἶη ἔρως.

Socrates makes Agathon concludes now that:

...ὁ ἔρως κάλλους ἂν εἶη ἔρως, αἰσχους δὲ οὐ... (201a9-10).

Then, from the principle that what is good is also beautiful (201c4-5), the conclusion that the good is also the object of Eros is drawn.

In this part of the argument beauty and goodness are just 'formal' objects of desire without specific reference.<sup>38</sup> There is interest -at least at this point- neither in

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<sup>37</sup> ὅθεν δὴ καὶ κατεσκευάσθη τῶν θεῶν τὰ πράγματα ἔρωτος ἐγγενομένου, δῆλον  
ὅτι κάλλους - αἰσχει γὰρ οὐκ ἐπὶ ἔρως - πρὸ τοῦ δέ, ὥσπερ ἐν ἀρχῇ  
εἶπον, πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ θεοῖς ἐγίγνετο, ὡς λέγεται, διὰ τὴν τῆς ἀνάγκης  
βασιλείαν.

making differences between the two concepts (actually it will never be clear what the relationship between the good and the beautiful is) nor in establishing a new reference by saying, for example, what things are καλά or ἀγαθά. Thus, the only thing asserted up to this point is that the object that Eros does not have and lacks is the beautiful and the good, with exclusion of the bad and the ugly.

However, a question can start to be raised here: does this mean that all desire or, more specifically, all ἔρως is for the beautiful and the good? Or that in all of us there is *a kind of* ἔρως which naturally desires the good and the beautiful?

### 2.2.7. Eros is neither good nor beautiful

His object of desire being the beautiful and the good, Eros, according to what was established before, lacks what is beautiful and, in consequence, what is good:

εἰ ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως τῶν καλῶν ἐνδεής ἐστι, τὰ δὲ ἀγαθὰ καλά, καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐνδεής εἴη. (201c4-5)

and so is himself neither good nor beautiful.<sup>39</sup> This assertion receives a further development in Diotima's speech through the characterization of Eros as a

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<sup>38</sup> For this reason "beauty"/"goodness" can equally refer to beauty/goodness in general and/or its particular instances (differently, Nussbaum thinks that there is the implicit premise that what is loved is a beautiful individual and not beauty in general (Nussbaum (1986), pp. 178-179). On this point see also n. 39 below.

<sup>39</sup> Nussbaum (1986) says, pp. 178-179 that Eros' object of desire must be particular instances and not beauty in general since an individual can desire the beauty of another individual or thing, being beautiful himself and so not lacking beauty in general (similarly Dover (1980), p. 136 and Soble (1985), 43-44). I disagree with Nussbaum because here only desire as such is being considered and so the lover or subject of desire is taken *qua lover* (but not the whole person with his or her properties) and as such is not beautiful. It is true that Eros and the individuals who erotically desire can be considered beautiful and be desired. However, in that case for Plato Eros would not be being considered insofar as it is erotic desire but insofar as it is object of desire. In other words, the

μεταξύ. However, for the moment the only thing that can be concluded is that beauty and goodness cannot be attributes of Eros.

### 2.3. Subject and object of desire in the *Lysis*. Similarities with the *Symposium*

Many of the points agreed in the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon and later in Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* fit remarks made in the *Lysis*. I do not intend here a final solution to the numerous problems of the *Lysis*. I just mean to point out assertions made in this dialogue on the subject and object of desire that are obviously close to some statements in the *Symposium*.<sup>40</sup> For this purpose I base myself on two assumptions concerning the *Lysis* in general that will not receive demonstration here due to the limitations of my approach:

a) Although the concrete phenomenon of φιλία and of being φίλος are taken as the starting point of the analysis, the argument shifts to an examination of desire in general.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, this does not hinder the consideration of the particular case of φιλία in the light of the general conclusions.<sup>42</sup>

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subjects of desire might also be seen as objects of desire and not as subject and thus appear as beautiful; but for this it is not necessary to reformulate anything of what Plato proposes about the structure of Eros.

<sup>40</sup> The aspects of the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon and of Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* that match with assertions in the *Lysis* will be indicated by footnotes.

<sup>41</sup> For example, in *Lys.* 221d2-e1 ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμεῖν with its participial forms are used to describe the desire of the subject for his object. See also in *Lys.* 221e3-4 the interchangeable use of ἔρωσ, φιλία and ἐπιθυμία in order to refer to the desire for τὸ οἰκεῖον as a possible candidate for being φίλον and so an object of desire.

<sup>42</sup> Thus, for example, at the end of the dialogue (*Lys.* 223b4-8), Socrates turns back to mention the φιλία existing between him and his two young interlocutors. The apparently equivocal use of the term φιλία and φίλος is not due to Plato's confusion on this point. The ambiguity allows Socrates to keep moving from the level of friendship as interpersonal relationship to the level of desire in general. This flexibility of the term also helps him on many occasions to create new ἀπορίαι and

b) Similarly to what we have seen in the ἔλεγχος by Socrates of Agathon, through the apparently aporetic discussion, a description of certain characteristics of the subject and object of desire is given through the successive arguments of the dialogue.<sup>43</sup> In this sense the dialogue is at the same time aporetic and 'euporetic'.<sup>44</sup> However, the assertions are left open to further development and correction at the end of the dialogue.

### 2.3.1. The distinction between subject and object of desire

Socrates' dialogue with Menexenus starts from the assumption that φιλία has to be mutual (*Lys.* 212b3-5). This assumption seems to have the problematic implication that, in that case, you can love someone who hates you and hate someone who loves you (*Lys.* 213b7-c4). In spite of its paradoxical result, in this section there is a first discrimination between the subject of desire (ὁ φιλῶν) and the object of desire (ὁ φιλούμενος) and an initial inquiry on the relationship and characteristics of one and the other.<sup>45</sup>

### 2.3.2. Object of desire

As shown above in the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon,<sup>46</sup> in the *Lysis* it is often hinted that the object of desire is the good and the beautiful. However, a more concrete reference to what the good and the beautiful would be remains, to

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so to take the examination further on and keep his audience in a state of acknowledged ignorance on the subject treated.

<sup>43</sup> On the constructive aspects of the ἔλεγχος see above 2.2. 'Euporetic' ἔλεγχος: positive assertions on the structure of Eros, pp. 28 ff..

<sup>44</sup> On the 'euporetic' and 'aporetic' character of the *Lysis* and its dovetailing with the *Symposium* see Rowe (2000). Kahn (1996), pp. 264-267 has also pointed out the positive assertions of the *Lysis* which, according to him, anticipate the ones made in the *Symposium*. For more discussion about the *Lysis* see Robinson & Brisson (eds.) (2000), pp. 157-236.

<sup>45</sup> See above 2.2.1. Eros intentional/relational structure, p. 32.

use Plato's own words, "elusive" (λιπαρός) (*Lys.* 216c7). In the *Lysis* there is also a formal description of the object of desire as the final end for the sake of which all that is loved is loved:

- a) Through the argument on the supposed φιλία of things that are like (*Lys.* 213e4ff.) a first assertion is made in relation to the object of desire being the good: the like loves the like *only when the like is the good* (*Lys.* 214d3-7; 215a3-5).<sup>47</sup>
- b) At the end of the argument on the supposed φιλία between opposites it is asserted again that what the subject of desire, who is neither good nor bad, loves is the good (*Lys.* 216d3-4), which coincides with the beautiful (*Lys.* 216d2). The bad and "the neither good nor bad" are excluded as objects of desire (*Lys.* 216e6-7).
- c) In the most obviously instructive section there is a formal description of the object of desire: the original or first object of love (ὁ ἐστὶν πρῶτον φίλον) is that for the sake of which all the other things we call φίλα are φίλα (*Lys.* 219c7-5; 220b1-7). In other words, in a teleological understanding of human motivation, the object of desire is what is put at the top of hierarchy of ends and means. The absolute end would be what does not require a further reference in order to be wanted or desired.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See above 2.2.5. **The object of Eros: the beautiful and the good**, pp. 36 ff..

<sup>47</sup> The apparent aporia based on the self-sufficiency of the good so that friends, because of being good and alike, would not need each other will be removed by discriminating between a subject of desire who is essentially deficient and the object of desire, which is self-sufficient and identified with the good.

<sup>48</sup> Similarly in Diotima's speech the good seems to be identified with happiness as a final end that does not require further reference (see 205a1-3). Beauty itself is also recognized by the lover who has gone through the whole erotic ascent and attained the contemplation of it as "the very beauty, that all his previous toils were for" (210e5-6) and "the final goal of matters of love" (210e3-4). The relationship between happiness and Beauty as the aims of ἔρως can be understood in the following way: a) ἔρως as such aims at what is beautiful and achieves maximum development if it ever attains contemplation Beauty itself; b) but simultaneously, by procreation in Beauty itself, the lover achieves the good universally desired and, in consequence, happiness and a god-like immortality as far as this is possible for a human being.

οὐκοῦν τό γε τῷ ὄντι φίλον οὐ φίλου τινὸς ἔνεκα φίλον ἐστίν; ...μὴ φίλου τινὸς ἔνεκα τὸ φίλον φίλον εἶναι. (*Lys.* 220b4-7)

At the end of this part of the argument there is a new indication that this *πρῶτον* φίλον has to be the good:

- ἄλλ' ἄρα τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶ φίλον; - ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ. (*Lys.* 220b7-8)

e) Finally, in the last part of the argument (*Lys.* 221e3-222e7), τὸ οἰκεῖον is reintroduced as possible reference of ὁ φίλος/τὸ φίλον. If τὸ οἰκεῖον were assimilable to τὸ ὅμοιον, it would generate again the paradox that the love between similar entities brings (*Lys.* 222b3-c1). So it is agreed that τὸ οἰκεῖον must be something different from τὸ ὅμοιον (*Lys.* 222c1-3). At this point Socrates significantly tries to consider the possibility that τὸ ἀγαθόν is what belongs (τὸ οἰκεῖον) to everybody (*Lys.* 222c3-5), which would imply that τὸ φίλον is in fact the good which all we desire, being deprived of it. Unfortunately both Menexenus and Lysis choose to take Socrates's second option –the bad belongs to the bad, the good to the good, the neither bad nor good to the neither bad nor good (*Lys.* 222c7-d1). In this way they understand the assimilation of τὸ ἀγαθόν and τὸ οἰκεῖον in the sense that “the like loves the like” –the unjust is friend to the unjust, the bad to the bad, the good to the good (*Lys.* 222d5-7). This leads the argument again to the aporia of the supposed *φιλία* of things that are alike (*Lys.* 222d1-8). Nevertheless, the possible solution that τὸ φίλον is in fact τὸ ἀγαθόν has been suggested by Socrates at *Lys.* 222c7-d1, despite Menexenus' lack of understanding.

e) The “slipperiness” of the beautiful and, as a consequence, of the good is pointed out at *Lys.* 216c7-d2:

ἔοικε γοῦν μαλακῶ τινι καὶ λείῳ καὶ λιπαρῶ. διὸ καὶ ἴσως ῥαδίως  
διολισθαίνει καὶ διαδύεται ἡμᾶς, ἅτε τοιοῦτον ὄν.

This elusiveness is connected to the fact that, as well as the fact that dialogue offers no definitive solution to what ὁ φίλος/τὸ φίλον would be (including in the list of possibilities, the good) (*Lys.* 222e3-7), it is not established what the beautiful and the good refer to, either.

### 2.3.3. Subject of desire

The subject of desire in the *Lysis* is characterized in similar terms to the Eros of the *Symposium* which, being neither good nor beautiful, desires the good because of his own deficient condition:<sup>49</sup>

a) The argument on φιλία between opposites (*Lys.* 215e1-3) leads to the paradox that, in that case, a thing hating would be friend of a friendly thing, the just of the unjust, the good of the bad (*Lys.* 216b2-5). Nevertheless, a positive characterization of the subject of desire similar to the one in the *Symposium* begins in this section. The friend of the good -or in other words, what/who loves the good- turns out to be what is neither good nor bad:

...ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακὸν φίλον οὔτω ποτὲ γιγνόμενον τοῦ  
ἀγαθοῦ.<sup>50</sup> *Lys.* 216c2-3

b) After this, the possibility is considered that the cause of “the neither good nor bad” desiring the good, which is μεταξύ between the good and the bad (*Lys.* 220d4-7), is the bad:

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<sup>49</sup> See above 2.2.3. Eros’ lacking condition, p. 34 and 2.2.6. Eros is neither good nor beautiful, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> “...it may rather be something neither good nor bad that will prove after all to be what we call friend of the good.” I follow Lamb’s translation.

τὸ μήτε κακὸν ἄρα μήτ' ἀγαθὸν φίλον γίγνεται τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διὰ κακοῦ παρουσίαν. (*Lys.* 217b4-6)

This thesis is submitted to successive corrections:

-In “the neither good nor bad” the bad would be present *accidentally*, not essentially (*Lys.* 217e4-218a2).

-After imagining a possible world where the bad did not exist, Socrates concludes that the reason for “the neither good nor bad” desiring the good is not the bad but desire itself:

...ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς φιλίας αἰτία, καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν φίλον ἐστὶ τούτῳ οὐ ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ τότε ὅταν ἐπιθυμῇ...(*Lys.* 221d3-4)

In this way the good is desired not because of the presence of the bad but because of the lacking condition of desire:

-...τό γε ἐπιθυμοῦν οὐ ἂν ἐνδεὲς ᾗ, τοῦτου ἐπιθυμεῖ...τὸ δ' ἐνδεὲς ἄρα φίλον ἐκείνου οὐ ἂν ἐνδεὲς ᾗ; -δοκεῖ μοι. (*Lys.* 221d7-e2)

This implies that deficiency or absence of goodness turns to be something different from badness.

## 2.4. Conclusion

So a similar characterization of the subject and object of desire seems to be present in both the *Lysis* and the *ἔλεγχος* by Socrates of Agathon in the *Symposium*. In Diotima/Socrates' speech these ideas receive further development.

**3. Diotima/Socrates' speech. The truest and best ἐγκώμιον to Eros: Eros as φιλόσοφος (201d1-212a7)**



In the discourse of Diotima the description of what Eros is and the effects he has continues based on what has been agreed by Socrates and Agathon. There are, nevertheless, some important twists in the argument. On the one hand, although the exposition remains focused on erotic desire, the meaning of Eros is more clearly widened to refer in a more general sense to the intense desire that leads each life and not just to sexual passion. On the other hand, from the very beginning, the argument tends to be focused more and more on one kind of passion that, hopefully, can inspire our life: φιλοσοφία or love for the truth. Diotima's speech ends with a sketch of what the maximum development of the love of truth would be like so that in this life contemplation of Beauty itself alongside production of true virtue would be attained, whereas, after death, god-like immortality with permanent possession of the good and happiness might be achieved.

### 3.1. Diotima as Socrates' mask

The fictionality of Diotima has been nicely described by Robin<sup>51</sup> through the image of a mask used by Socrates in order to proceed with his philosophical exposition about Eros and, at the same time, not to break the festive atmosphere by continuing with the ἔλεγχος, which is usually felt to be aggressive by Socrates' interlocutors.<sup>52</sup>

There are many elements that confirm the fictional character of Diotima not only for us, the readers, but also for Socrates' audience.<sup>53</sup>

a) First of all, there is one anachronism: Diotima's reference at 205d-e to the speech which Aristophanes has just given.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Robin (1951), pp. xxii-xxvii. On the fictionality of Diotima see also Dover (1980), pp. 137-138; Nussbaum (1986), pp. 177 and 467, n. 28; Waterfield (1994), pp. 99-100; Rowe (1998), p. 173.

<sup>52</sup> See *Men.* 79b; *Apol.* 30e-31a.

<sup>53</sup> See also Levin (1975).

b) The content of the discourse is typically Platonic (especially the description of the Idea of Beauty itself at 210-211b and 211e).

c) Plato's choice of the name Διοτίμα for this character seems to be closely related with what she represents in the text: an individual blessed by the gods because of her knowledge.

But the reason why Socrates hides behind the fictional mask of Diotima is not just for reasons of politeness. As we have seen above, the character of Diotima allows Socrates to provide the example of an erotic philosophical attitude, which Agathon fails to offer.<sup>55</sup> In this way, Socrates, who has claimed not to know about anything except τὰ ἐρωτικά, can present himself as ignorant and needing to learn in a typical example of his irony.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to this, the character of Diotima presents certain peculiarities that are related to what she represents in the text:

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<sup>54</sup> Nails (2002), pp. 137-138 suggests that Diotima might be historical character. She tries to justify Diotima's reference to Aristophanes' speech by suggesting that the speech might be based on an authentic but lost work of Aristophanes. Her supposition does not seem very likely. Taylor (1960) [1926], pp. 224-225 also suggests that Diotima is an historical character. His main argument is that Plato never uses invented characters in his works. However, see Brisson's answer to Taylor's arguments (Brisson (1998), pp. 29-30).

<sup>55</sup> See Rowe (1998), p. 168.

<sup>56</sup> See Vlastos (1987), who distinguishes between the usual sense of irony as a rhetorical figure –i.e. to mean the opposite that what is stated– and the particular meaning of Socratic irony, which would be to assert and deny at the same time so that a sort of riddle is formulated to the listener. He bases his interpretation in an analysis the meaning of εἰρωνεύομενος at 216e4. If we take Vlastos' idea, it is possible to think that through the use of Diotima's mask, Socrates would be simultaneously asserting both his knowledge and his lack of knowledge about τὰ ἐρωτικά. This riddle may be understood in this way: Socrates has knowledge to teach about Love in the sense that he can give a report on what an erotic ascent to Beauty itself would be like so that he can motivate people to embark on a philosophical life. But, at the same time, he does not have knowledge to teach about Love because the real acquisition of this wisdom depends on each person undertaking a philosophical way of life and going through the steps sketched in the erotic ascent.

a) She is a *Mantinean* woman (γυναικὸς Μαντινικῆς Διοτίμας) who is σοφὴ on these things (i.e. τὰ ἐρωτικά) and many others (201d2-3). Μαντινικῆς does not indicate just her homeland but suggests as well that her wisdom is that of a μάντις, i.e. that she possesses a power of intervention with the gods (such as in the case of the ten years' postponement of the plague for the Athenians, 201d). In other words, Diotima, similarly to the daimonic-intermediary Eros (202e-203a), is in contact with the gods and brings the mortal realm into communication with the immortal and vice versa.

b) Plato seems to choose the name Διοτίμα because of its connotations.<sup>57</sup> The components of her name can mean either 'honouring Zeus' or 'being honoured by Zeus'.<sup>58</sup> This might be connected with the fact that she provides an example of someone θεοφιλῆς because of her knowledge of τὰ ἐρωτικά and so of her having arrived at the contemplation of divine Beauty itself and the enjoyment of its consequences.<sup>59</sup>

c) The place of wisdom is occupied by a woman.<sup>60</sup> This may look astonishing when one considers the inferior position that women had in ancient Greek society.<sup>61</sup> In relation to this we must remember that according to Socrates in *Rep.*451c-457b men and women are approximately the same intellectually and morally.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, we must think, that, although ordinary women were regarded

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<sup>57</sup> Dover (1980), p. 137 says that, although the name Διοτίμος was more common, Διοτίμα is also attested from Boeotia in the early classical period (similarly Brisson (1998), p. 28). Differently Blair (1996) thinks that it is a name invented by Plato.

<sup>58</sup> See Dover (1980), p. 137 who compares the term Διοτίμα with adjectives such as θεότιμος in Pindar and ξενότιμος in Aeschylus. See also Brisson (1998), p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> See below 3.4.3. **The science of Beauty itself**, pp. 75 ff.. Diotima must possess this science since she is described as wise on τὰ ἐρωτικά.

<sup>60</sup> See Halperin (1990).

<sup>61</sup> See Foucault (1985), pp. 22-23 and chs. 4 and 5 of Pomeroy (1987), pp. 57-92.

<sup>62</sup> On this point see Dover (1980), p.137.

as socially inferior, it is common in Greek literature of the time that women appear in charge of priesthood and religious wisdom.<sup>63</sup>

All the above features of Diotima's character seem to imply that from this point of the argument onwards the description of and ἐγκώμιον to Eros involves a superior form of wisdom and contact with the divine, which is directly connected with the conception of Eros as philosopher.

### 3.2. Eros as φιλόσοφος

In Diotima's speech the assertions made in Socrates' dialogue with Agathon are picked up on and reformulated in order to describe a particular, in fact the best kind of ἔρως: ἔρως- φιλόσοφος. For this purpose Plato transforms the concept of μεταξύ. μεταξύ initially refers exclusively to something 'intermediate', i.e. *between* two things and/or which, having a hybrid nature, can associate with things of opposite characteristics. But in the *Symposium*, by connecting the notion of μεταξύ with ὀρθὴ δόξα and, especially, with the notion of a δαίμων, it tends to mean not just something intermediate but 'intermediary' as well, i.e. something that joins two realms, in this case the philosophical Eros that links our mortal domain with what is immortal and divine. In the myth of Eros' birth all the remarks previously made about Eros' nature and about his being an 'intermediary' δαίμων are brought together in order to give a dynamic description of the philosophical Eros.

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<sup>63</sup> On women as possessors of wisdom in Plato see Blair (1996) who refers to the following passages in the Platonic corpus: *Crit.* 44a; *Ap.* 21a; *Menex.* 235c-236b; *Theaet.* 210c; *Phaed.* 60a; *Men.* 81a; *Phaedr.* 244a-b; *Symp.* 201d-e; *Gorg.* 512e. The goddess of Parmenides' poem and of the tablets of Thuri who report some Orphic beliefs are also cases of wisdom –in many cases superhuman knowledge- as an attribute of a female characters (see Eggers Lan (1987), p. 37, n.23). On this point see also Brisson (1998), p. 28. Saxonhouse (1984) also makes an attempt to defend that also in the characters of Socrates and Alcibiades in the *Symposium* female and male characteristics coexist.

### 3.2.1. Eros as μεταξύ: intermediate and intermediary

As we have seen, in the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon Eros has been described –similarly to the subject of desire in the *Lysis*– as something deficient (in the present time and if not, at least, in the future) in the beautiful and the good that it desires and, thus, as neither good nor beautiful.

Diotima's dialogue with Socrates takes this last assertion as its starting point:

...ὁ Ἔρως...οὔτε καλός...οὔτε ἀγαθός (201e5-7)

This does not imply that Eros is then ugly or bad (see 202b1-2). He is rather τι μεταξύ, between, these things (202b4-5).<sup>64</sup>

In this way, first of all, from being just something neither good nor beautiful Eros comes now to be something neither good nor bad, neither beautiful nor ugly. This distinction supposes the distinction between contrary and contradictory terms that is explicitly drawn at *Soph.* 257b.<sup>65</sup>

Secondly, Eros is described as something *between* what is good and beautiful and what is bad and ugly. But what does this mean? In order to give an answer to this question, I shall make a brief review of the basic meaning of μεταξύ and of its philosophical meaning in passages of the *Gorgias* and *Lysis* in order to compare it with its sense in the *Symposium*.

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<sup>64</sup> Similarly in the *Lysis* the subject of desire is what is neither good nor bad (see *Lys.* 216c2-3).

<sup>65</sup> When Plato explains at *Soph.* 257b that not-being is not something opposed to being but only different he says: "The negative particles, οὐ and μή, when prefixed to words do not necessarily

### 3.2.1.1. The meaning of μεταξύ

The components of the term μεταξύ -the prepositions μετά and σύν/ξύν- mainly share the meaning of 'association', 'to be with'.<sup>66</sup> The primary meaning of μεταξύ seems to be rather 'between', which is connected with one of the possible meanings of μετά. But, in fact, the connotation of 'association' can also be present, indicating coexistence of opposite qualities.<sup>67</sup>

### 3.2.1.2. μεταξύ as 'intermediate' in *Gorgias* 467e ff.

In Plato's use of μεταξύ in general we find the habitual meaning of 'between' two positions (spatial meaning) or two moments (temporal meaning).<sup>68</sup>

In a more philosophical context μεταξύ can mean 'between' in two different ways:

- a) In reference to a process that takes place between two states, as in *Phaed.* 71a 12-13; *Theaet.* 188a2-3; *Parm.* 156e8-157a2.
- b) In reference to *entities* which, being between entities of opposite kinds, usually -but not always- combine opposite qualities. Here the meaning of 'association' of μεταξύ is more obviously present.

This last case is exemplified by a passage at *Gorg.* 467e-468a<sup>69</sup> which refers to what, being μεταξύ τούτων (i.e. the good and the bad), is οὔτε ἀγαθόν οὔτε

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imply opposition, but only difference from words, or more correctly from the things represented by the things, which follow them" (Jowett's translation).

<sup>66</sup> Chantraine (1968), s.v. μεταξύ.

<sup>67</sup> See *LSJ* (1940<sup>9</sup>), s.v. μετά, μεταξύ, σύν/ξύν.

<sup>68</sup> See Pl. *Charm.* 155c4-5; *Phaed.* 58c5; *Rep.* 393b7-8.

<sup>69</sup> The case of *Prot.* 346d is similar but τὰ μέσα is used instead of τὰ μεταξύ.

κακόν (*Gorg.* 467e). These intermediate things (τὰ μετὰξύ) can sometimes partake of the good, sometimes of the bad and sometimes of neither (they are, thus, neutral) (*Gorg.* 468a). What interests Plato here is when these “neither good nor bad” intermediate activities are executed for the sake of the good (ἔνεκα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, *Gorg.* 468b3-4), i.e. when they are intermediate good means for a good final end. In this case, the intermediate activities are not neutral but partake of the good, insofar as they are good means for attaining it. However, two other possibilities are kept open: if these activities were done for a bad end, they would participate in the bad; if they were done neither for a bad nor for a good purpose, they would be neutral.<sup>70</sup>

In short these entities, being neither good nor bad, are ‘intermediate’ or μετὰξύ in two ways:

- They are *between* good and bad entities.
- They are in a hybrid condition so that they can become associated either with the good or the bad or neither of them.

### 3.2.1.3. μετὰξύ in *Lys.* 220d4-7. ‘Intermediate’ and ‘intermediary’ status of the subject of desire

In the *Lysis* μετὰξύ is used only once in order to describe us, human beings, as subjects who, being neither good nor bad, desire the good:

ἀρ’ οὕτω πέφυκέ τε καὶ φιλεῖται τὰγαθόν διὰ τὸ κακὸν ὑφ’ ἡμῶν, τῶν μετὰξύ ὄντων τοῦ κακοῦ τε καὶ τὰγαθοῦ, αὐτὸ δὲ ἑαυτοῦ ἔνεκα οὐδεμίαν χρεῖαν ἔχει; (*Lys.* 220d4-7).

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<sup>70</sup> Differently D. Frede (1993), p.405 considers that the “neither good nor bad” intermediate entities of this passage of the *Gorgias* are always neutral.

A reference to what has already been said and what is said afterwards in the dialogue is required in order to establish what μεταξύ probably refers to here. At 217b the possibility that we, as subjects of desire who are neither good nor bad, love the good because of the presence of the bad has been introduced. Based on this thesis it is suggested in the present passage that we, intermediate creatures between the good and the bad, desire the good because of the presence of the bad. But, if we accept the results of the argument developed immediately after this (namely that we do not love the good because of the bad but because of desire itself (221d)), what is said in this passage could be rectified in the following way: we, as subjects of desire, who, being neither good nor bad and so intermediate between the good and the bad, love the good because of desire, i.e. because we lack what we desire (221d-e).

Thus, the subject of desire is 'intermediate' (μεταξύ) and neither good nor bad in the ways identified above in *Gorgias*:

- because we are *between* what is absolutely bad and what is absolutely good;
- because the bad (and, as logical consequence of the argument, the good) can be present in us but just *accidentally* (otherwise, we would tend to be completely bad (or good) (see 217b ff.)). So we are sort of hybrid entities that can be both good or bad.

However, there is a new element in the concept of μεταξύ which, if we consider the passage in the context as I suggest above, is implied at 221c-d:<sup>71</sup> and that is

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<sup>71</sup> D. Frede (1993), p. 406 thinks that, in a different way from the *Symposium*, in the *Lysis* "the intermediate desires the good only if there is a menace of some evil. Without such a menace, there is no need for the good (220d)". Differently from her, I think that the solution of the *Symposium* in relation to the concept of intermediary is at least suggested in the *Lysis*. I also disagree with her with respect to the incompatibility of the concept of intermediary as it appears in the *Symposium* and the thesis defended in the *Phaedo*, particularly, according to her analysis, the 'argument from the opposites' demonstrating the existence of the soul (see D. Frede (1993), p.404. Contrary to this,



that the neither good nor bad because of its lacking condition (and not because of the possible presence of the bad) looks for and desires the acquisition of that of which is deprived. In this way the desire of the subject who is neither good nor bad and is deprived of the good turns out to be not just an 'intermediate' but 'intermediary', i.e. a means for trying to obtain and possess, at least temporarily, the good. In the *Symposium* this meaning of μεταξύ receives further development.

#### 3.2.1.4. Eros as μεταξύ in the *Symposium*: comparison with ὀρθὴ δόξα;

Eros as a δαίμων; Eros as φιλόσοφος. Eros as 'intermediate' and 'intermediary' between the divine sphere and the human realm

##### a) Eros is μεταξύ like ὀρθὴ δόξα (202a1-10)

ὀρθὴ δόξα (202a9) or τὸ ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν (202a5) is the state of mind of having correct beliefs that happen to coincide with reality (τὸ τοῦ ὄντος τυγχάνον, 202a7-8). This is an irrational state (ἄλογον πράγμα, 202a2), given that it is not possible to give a rational account (λόγον δοῦναι, 202a1) of these beliefs in question. This cognitive state is μεταξύ because it lies between two opposite states of mind:

-ἐπιστήμη, a cognitive state in which is possible to offer a rational account which consists in giving the foundations of these beliefs.<sup>72</sup> This explanation would be ideally based on the Ideas and so be equivalent to σοφία or φρόνησις.<sup>73</sup> This state of mind is fully possessed only by the gods (see 204a1-2).

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the ψυχή in the *Phaedo* seems to play a very similar role to the Eros-φιλόσοφος in the *Symposium*, i.e. what communicates the human realm with the divine domain.

<sup>72</sup> See *Men.* 98a and *Theaet.* 201c ff.

<sup>73</sup> So a full explanation would be the account that is possible to give after the whole dialectical journey. This includes the moment of catching sight of the Idea or principles. On this point cf. Sier (1997), pp. 62-63.

-ἀμαθία, a cognitive state in which not only is it impossible to give a rational account but also the beliefs which characterize it do not coincide with reality, i.e. are false. As we are told later, the fundamentally wrong belief in the state of the ἀμαθής or person in the state of ἀμαθία is the idea that it is not necessary to look for foundations for what he believes and so he does not recognize his ignorance (204a3-7).

So, ὀρθὴ δόξα is μεταξύ in the sense of 'intermediate' in two ways:

- a) it is placed *between* knowledge and ignorance;
- b) it is a hybrid state of mind that combines characteristics of the other two: the rightness of wisdom and the lack of grounds of ignorance.

In addition to this, if we consider the state of mind of right belief not just statically but in regard to its possibility of looking for the rational account which it lacks – and so of becoming φιλοσοφία as described at 204b1-c8-<sup>74</sup>, the state of ὀρθὴ δόξα can also be seen as an 'intermediary', i.e. as an inceptive cognitive state which might take us in the direction of ἐπιστήμη or σοφία.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, from what is said at 202a1-10 this implication of the concept of right opinion can only be speculation.

Thus, through the comparison of Eros' μεταξύ condition with that of ὀρθὴ δόξα Eros becomes associated with its place *between* knowledge and ignorance

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<sup>74</sup> On the coincidence of ὀρθὴ δόξα and φιλοσοφία see Rowe (2001).

<sup>75</sup> At *Rep.* 583c the cognitive state of δόξα is similarly considered a μεταξύ state of mind between 'knowledge' (ἐπιστήμη) and 'ignorance' (ἄγνοια). The difference is that, given that this δόξα is not ὀρθή, there is no guarantee that from this state someone will move to a philosophical state of mind, i.e. stop believing only in multiple beautiful things and look for what make all of them beautiful: the Idea of Beauty (for a further development on this point see **Chapter 2, Section III, 2. Higher Education**, pp. 214 ff. and **Chapter 3: Conclusion**, pp. 264 ff.). The state of ἄγνοια –ignorance in the sense of 'no knowledge of any kind'– is different from ἀμαθία –ignorance in the sense of 'stupidity'.

and it unites characteristics from the one and the other. Furthermore, the potential transformation of ὀρθὴ δόξα into σοφία, should the grounds of the right beliefs be looked for and attained, seems to prepare for the concept of φιλοσοφία (204b1-c8). In this way, all these elements pave the way for the characterization of Eros as φιλόσοφος or lover of the truth, who is also placed between ignorance and wisdom.

**b) Eros: a δαίμων-μεταξύ (202b1-203a8)**

Diotima teaches Socrates that Eros is not a god but a great δαίμων and that, as such, is neither mortal nor immortal but “between” (μεταξύ) the mortal/human ambit and the immortal/divine sphere:

...μεταξὺ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου. ...δαίμων μέγας... (202d11-13).

The two characteristics of μεταξύ as ‘intermediate’ appear again in this characterization:

- a δαίμων and, so Eros, is *in the middle* of two domains;
- and, at the same time, its nature is a hybrid with characteristics of both: neither mortal nor immortal, neither human nor divine.

But, above all, Eros as a δαίμων has, thanks to its hybrid nature, the active role of being a binding ‘intermediary’<sup>76</sup> between these two spheres:

ἐρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ’ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, [...] ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὄν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συνδεδεσθαι (202e3-7)

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<sup>76</sup> This aspect of Eros was already stressed by L. Robin in his classical work *La théorie platonicienne de l’ amour* (Robin (1908), pp. 9-23). For δαίμονες as creatures that communicate between human beings and gods see Hesiod, *Erga* 109, 122, 252.

Thus, the intermediary Eros (who is no longer a god, but simply a δαίμων) bestows upon us -mortal, human creatures- the facility of access to the gods, who are the only full possessors of the good and the beautiful, and so happy (202c6-9) immortal (208a8-b1) and wise (204a1-2). In this way, the argument is again shifted from a description of desire in general and of ἔρως as erotic desire toward an account of Eros as φιλόσοφος, which is also ‘intermediary’ insofar as it is the desire for achieving a god-like condition through the attainment of wisdom and the truth.<sup>77</sup>

### 3.2.2. The myth of Eros’ birth: Eros as φιλόσοφος (203b1-204c6)

In a delightful myth Plato recreates a primordial symposium of the gods during which Eros was not only celebrated in speeches (as in the present party at Agathon’s) but actually conceived and generated. In this story all the previous exposition of his nature and characteristics is assembled and extended in order to offer a portrait of Eros φιλόσοφος. As on other occasions, a myth proves to be for Plato a suitable resource for blending and developing in an intuitive form elements already worked out through dialectical arguments.

The lacking nature of Eros is now represented in his maternal Πενία-like features, as a result of which he is “always with lack as his companion” (203c), while his intentionality towards the good and the beautiful is symbolized by his paternal Πόρος-like features (ἐπιβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ ἀγαθοῖς, 203d4-5) and by his conception at the birthday party of the beautiful Aphrodite (διὸ δὴ καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀκόλουθος καὶ θεράπων γέγονεν ὁ Ἔρως, γεννηθεὶς ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνης γενεθλίοις, καὶ ἅμα φύσει ἐραστής

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<sup>77</sup> See below 3.4.3.3. The Idea of Beauty as ethical principle: wisdom and virtue, pp. 79 ff..

ὦν περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καλῆς οὔσης, 203c1-4).<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, we might reasonably suppose that his conception from parents who are gods<sup>79</sup> and in the course of a divine party establishes a primeval connection between Eros and the divine.

As a result of the intercourse between Πενία and Πόρος from which Eros originates, his being equipped with opposite characteristics is also explained:

καὶ οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός, ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ τότε δὲ ἀποθνήσκει, πάλιν ἀναβιώσκειται διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φύσιν, τὸ δὲ ποριζόμενον ἀεὶ ὑπερκεῖ, ὥστε οὔτε ἀπορεῖ Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ, σοφία τε αὖ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν. (203d8-e5).

In this passage, the hybrid nature of Eros is again exemplified by his “neither mortal nor immortal” condition, which has already been established as a typical feature of his being δαίμων-μεταξύ. Here this immortality-mortality -i.e. his periodical death and renaissance- is directly linked to the attainment of his object but unavoidable, subsequent loss of it. This feature of Eros is directly connected with his prospective structure<sup>80</sup> and temporal condition established in the dialogue

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<sup>78</sup> These characteristics of Eros as the god and erotic desire and of desire in general are established through the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon as we have shown above: **2.1. Eros’ intentional structure**, p. 27, **2.2. Eros’ lacking condition**, p. 29 and **2.5. The good and the beautiful as objects of desire**, p. 31.

<sup>79</sup> Eros’ father, Πόρος, is a god (203b2-3). Πενία, Eros’ mother, would be also in principle a goddess though of a peculiar kind insofar as she is ‘lacking’ by nature. Such a deprived condition is quite anomalous in the case of a god (actually Πενία’s features are the reason why Eros lacks the stability of a god). Her bizarre status as a goddess might also be suggested through the fact that she is not actually present at the party but arrives at the end to beg (but what else could she do being Poverty?).

<sup>80</sup> See above **2.2.5. Prospective structure**, pp. 34 ff..

between Socrates and Agathon, as a result of which the acquisition of his object in the present can never be guaranteed in the future but a new effort is required in order to keep it.

Simultaneously, in this same passage 203d8-e5, this mortal-immortal condition, which could be extended to desire in general,<sup>81</sup> appears associated with his being situated in an intermediate place, like ὀρθὴ δόξα (202a9), between wisdom and ignorance (σοφίας τε αὖ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν, 203e5) and so with his being φιλόσοφος, i.e. his being aware (unlike the ignorant or stupid (204a3-7)) of his lack of wisdom and his eagerness to possess it. In this way, the object that the Eros-philosopher attains but also loses turns out to be the good and the beautiful (ἐπιβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ ἀγαθοῖς, 203d4-5) manifested in the form of wisdom (ἐστίν...τῶν καλλίστων ἡ σοφία, 204b2-3). While his maternal aspects (see 203c6-d3) symbolize the limitations on his getting and keeping his object of desire,<sup>82</sup> his paternal features mean the possibility of –his ‘resources’ or ‘means’ for- getting what he pursues,<sup>83</sup> though ephemerally (τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ

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<sup>81</sup> Because all desire is directed to attaining its object but, even if the achievement of the object takes place, there is no guarantee of permanent achievement. On the extension of characteristics of Eros to desire in general see above 2.2.2. **Erotic desire as a species of desire in general**, pp. 32 ff..

<sup>82</sup> This is expressed in the myth with charming images of lack of shelter: “...far from delicate and beautiful...hard, dirty, barefoot, always sleeping in the ground, without blankets, stretching out under the sky in doorways and by the roadside.” (203c6-d3).

<sup>83</sup> The Πόρος-like features of Eros –“schemer after the beautiful and the good, courageous, impetuous, intense, clever hunter, always weaving new devices, both passionate for wisdom and resourceful in looking for it, philosophising all his life, a clever magician, sorcerer, an sophist”- indicate both Eros’ intention of attaining wisdom and the good and the beautiful and his resources for actually reaching them. As Albert (1991), pp. 53-54 shows, through a philological analysis, the term φιλόσοφος, like other compounds with φιλο-, indicates fondness for but also frequent contact with the object of fondness. So Eros should be able to attain his object of desire, though in a restricted way because of his Πενία-features.

ἀποθνήσκει, 203e1-3): wisdom (204b2-3), good and beautiful individuals (203d4-5) (and, as a consequence, happiness and immortality, which are also attributes of the gods).<sup>84</sup>

Thus, Eros' δαίμων-μεταξύ condition is reinterpreted here as being φιλόσοφος in the following way: his being *between* what is mortal and immortal, what is human and what is divine is now represented as his being an 'intermediate' *between* wisdom and ignorance (wisdom being an attribute only of the gods (204a1-2)). He has a hybrid nature that combines Πενία-like features and Πόρος-like features, especially -as the daimonic Eros- that of immortality-mortality, in as much as he attains and loses his object (wisdom). His being a "fastening" or 'intermediary' between gods and human beings is represented now through his condition as φιλόσοφος, i.e. his awareness of lacking divine wisdom, which makes him desire to achieve its possession and so direct him in that direction (204b1-8).<sup>85</sup>

### 3.3. Eros' works and effects

Some interpreters think that the section 204d1-209e4 on the works of Eros has to be taken playfully or, at least, sceptically due to its lack of internal logic or connection with the rest of Diotima's/Socrates' speech.<sup>86</sup> However, many scholars

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<sup>84</sup> For happiness and beauty as attributes of the gods see 202c6-8. For immortality 202d11-e1, 208b. In section 204d1-209e4 we find further developments in relation to these points: the object of desire is happiness in the form of the eternal possession of the good; this ownership of the good can be partially attained by procreating in beauty.

<sup>85</sup> In the *Lysis* φιλοσοφία is significantly brought in many times as an example of φιλία: first of all, Socrates' philosophical conversation with young Lysis and his friend is supposed to be an illustration for Hippothales of how one has to treat his beloved (206c); at 215d the ignorant person's loving for the one who knows is presented as one of the examples of friendship between opposites; at 218b-c lovers of wisdom are mentioned as an example of what is neither good nor bad.

<sup>86</sup> A good representative example of this tendency would be Wilamowitz, who describes this section as a "geistreiches Spiel" (cited by Wipperfurth (1965), p. 143). Dover also treats this section as

in the last century recognized a strong bond between this part of the argument and what precedes and follows it, though being aware that Diotima's description of Eros is in many ways astonishing and that the successive statements do not derive from each other in a strict logical way.<sup>87</sup> I follow here this last line of interpretation on the assumption that, in this section as well as in the rest of the speech, Plato is interested not in presenting an analytical deduction of statements about what desire is but in constructing and establishing the basis of a new hermeneutic through different ways of arguing, according to which ἔρως becomes a force that engages our whole existence and has its maximum expression in the search for the truth.

The previous characterization of Eros as directed toward the good and the beautiful and as 'intermediary' with the divine, as a result of his innate deficient/resourceful condition, is reformulated in this section in terms of a search for the eternal possession of the good in the form of happiness and immortality (204e1ff.) through procreation in beauty (206b7-8), which could be briefly rendered as a craving of Eros, in spite of limitations on his capacity for attaining his object, for being god-like. At the same time, by means of the assertion that we are all lovers, since we all love the good, and, especially, through the comparison of the meaning of ἔρως with the narrower and wider sense of the term ποίησις (205a5-d8), ἔρως is explicitly understood from this point onwards not just as erotic desire but as an intense desire that guides each person's life to the attainment of the good and, in consequence, of happiness and immortality. In this

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a piece of sophistry which, nevertheless, should not be reproved since it is at the service of ideas that Plato considered valuable (Dover (1980), p. 145). Santas (1988) finds certain inferences of the argument "puzzling" (see Santas (1988), nn. 35 and 39, pp. 53-54).

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Robin (1951) pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi and Wipperfurth (1965) pp. 123-124. Rowe, though pointing out the often paradoxical and playful character of Diotima's assertions, recognizes that at 204d1-209e4 a serious doctrine is meant "She is dealing in metaphor and paradox, and also, towards the end, [...] in irony. But at the same time there is no mistaking the hard and serious core that underlies the play of ideas here; ..." (Rowe (1998), p. 178).



life immortality can only be obtained vicariously by the creation of a new being, so that Eros turns out to be fundamentally a creative force (206b1ff.). Two different ways in which this passion is channelled are described here -the eagerness for biological procreation and the zeal for fame and honour through cultural procreation- and, through them, two ways of understanding how the eternal possession of the good, happiness and immortality can be achieved by human beings. The subsequent description of the “Higher Mysteries” (210a1-212a7) will show that the search for wisdom in Beauty itself (and so φιλοσοφία), which takes us to the production of true virtue and close to a god-like happiness and immortality (in this life and, maybe, in an after-life), is, in fact, what more perfectly brings us close to obtaining the real good that we all desire.

### 3.3.1. Reformulation of the object of Eros: eternal possession of the good, happiness and immortality

a) In the previous sections the interchangeability between the good and the beautiful as the objects of Eros has already been established (201a-b; 203d) (though without the relation between the two ever being precisely determined). Now, in this section on the works and effects of love (204d1-209e4) τὸ καλόν is replaced by τὸ ἀγαθόν:

-...ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν, [Διοτίμα ἔφην], τῶν καλῶν· τί ἐρᾷ;

καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὅτι γενέσθαι αὐτῷ.

-ἀλλὰ... τί ἐστὶ ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τὰ καλά;... [πυνθάνομαι]  
ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις μεταβαλὼν ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ τῷ ἀγαθῷ χρώμενος  
πυνθάνοιτο· φέρε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν· τί ἐρᾷ;

-γενέσθαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὐτῷ. (204d5-e4)

In this way the good turns out to be most properly the object of desire (see also 205d10-206b14), while beauty is the *medium* through which, by procreating in it

(οὐ τοῦ καλοῦ ὁ ἔρως...<ἄλλα> τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ τόκου ἐν τῷ καλῷ, 206e2-5), that object can be, in a way, attained:

<τὸ ἔργον τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀεὶ> ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τόκος ἐν καλῷ...(206b7-8)

b) It has also been previously established that Eros is desire for a continuous possession of his object so that, even if attained in the present, its preservation is still desired in the future (200c5-e9). However, this assertion is at this point strengthened since what is desired now becomes the *eternal* or *permanent* possession of the object of desire, the good (which would be at the same time a permanent desire):<sup>88</sup>

...οἱ ἄνθρωποι τἀγαθοῦ ἐρῶσιν [...]. καὶ εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτοῖς ἐρῶσιν [...]. καὶ οὐ μόνον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀεὶ εἶναι [...]. ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀεὶ. (206a3-13)

The possession of the good entails happiness –the final end of every desire:

κτήσει γὰρ [...] ἀγαθῶν οἱ εὐδαίμονες εὐδαίμονες,... (205a1).

In fact the *eternal* possession of the good is equivalent to the desire for permanent happiness, i.e. a happiness like that of the gods (πάντας θεοὺς...εὐδαίμονας εἶναι καὶ καλοὺς...<καὶ> εὐδαίμονας ...τοὺς τἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ καλὰ κεκτημένοις, 202c6-11).

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<sup>88</sup> On how ἀεὶ seems to indicate both –we wish for permanent possession of good things and we always wish for their permanent possession- see Rowe (1998), p. 179.

c) Eros has already been described as “neither mortal nor immortal” (202d11; 203d8-e1) and the ephemeral possession of his object of desire is depicted as his way of attaining a partial immortality (203e1-6). At present, in this context, immortality -understood as continuous existence (ideally as an unchangeable identity with itself as in the case of the gods’ immortality, 208a8-9)- comes to be a requirement of this eternal possession. It is for this reason that, the desire for the good also implies the desire for immortality. Thus:

ἀθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκάϊον μετὰ ἀγαθοῦ ...εἵπερ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἑαυτῷ εἶναι ἀεὶ ἔρωσ ἔστιν. ἀναγκάϊον δὲ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας τὸν ἔρωτα εἶναι. (206e8-207a4)

So, as a conclusion from a)-c), what Eros desires most of all is happiness with the eternal possession of the good, and immortality seen as a requisite for or actually consisting in this permanent possession (procreation in beauty being the means of obtaining these things in this life). In short, Eros yearns to be god-like.<sup>89</sup>

### 3.3.2. Eros as the leading passion of one’s life

In the section on the works and effects of love (204d1-209e4) the meaning of the term ‘ἔρωσ’ is explicitly broadened, but at the same time, eagerness and intensity are kept as its distinctive marks, so that ἔρωσ does not refer exclusively to erotic desire but also fundamentally to the ‘current’ of desire or passion that dominates each person’s life. This transformation of the sense of ἔρωσ is achieved in a variety of ways:

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<sup>89</sup> So happiness as the eternal possession of the good is a final end (205a1-3) in a similar way to the *πρῶτον φίλον* of the *Lysis*. The initiated philosopher is the only person who might be able to *know* that this happiness that we all wish for consists, in fact, in procreation in Beauty itself so that he attains the good universally desired so far as is possible for a human being.

a) The replacement at 204e1-2 of τὸ καλόν by τὸ ἀγαθόν makes possible the assertion that the love for the good is common to all of us and in that sense we are all lovers, people in love:

- ταύτην δὴ τὴν βούλησιν καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦτον πότερα κοινὸν οἶει εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων, καὶ πάντας τάγαθὰ βούλεσθαι αὐτοῖς εἶναι αἰεὶ, ἢ πῶς λέγεις; [...] τί δὴ οὖν [...] οὐ πάντας ἐρᾶν φαμεν, εἴπερ γε πάντες τῶν αὐτῶν ἐρώσι καὶ αἰεὶ [...]; (205a5-b1)

As we have seen above in 3.3.1., as lovers of the good, what we all desire is happiness through its eternal possession and, as a consequence, immortality (which makes this eternal possession possible).

b) The comparison of the meaning of 'ἔρως' with the meaning of 'ποίησις' at 205a5-d8 emphasizes that ἔρως has to be taken in a wider sense and not just as 'sexual passion'. If we understand ποίησις as "what causes whatever to pass from not-being into being", then all kinds of productive activities could be seen as forms of it, although the word is normally reserved only for one of its manifestations: poetry (205c4-9). Similarly, all of us are lovers -insofar as we all desire the good and happiness- and look for it in different ways, although what is denoted by the term 'ἔρως' is normally restricted to 'sexual desire' (205d1-8). Consequently, the term ἔρως, while still retaining the intensity and eagerness characteristic of it in normal use, now clearly refers to the passion that dominates each person's life for attaining what is good.<sup>90</sup>

c) At 206b1 the argument turns back to sexual passion, exemplified in the eagerness of living creatures for procreation and their regard for their offspring (the procreation κατὰ τὸ σῶμα as a means of achieving vicarious immortality)

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<sup>90</sup> So Plato is not referring with ἔρως here to "momentary impulses but wishes, desires, aspirations that determine the ultimate goals of life", i.e. an "over-all desire or wish for what is taken to be good" (Moravcsik (1971), p. 290).

but only to extend immediately the meaning of ἔρωσ to cultural creation (procreation κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν, which is considered as a higher kind of erotic expression).

Thus, the wider sense of ἔρωσ as the passion that involves our whole life,<sup>91</sup> along with its specific feature of zeal for beauty, are kept in this section.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Rowe (1998), pp. 181-182 interprets the whole passage as being about 'generic' ἔρωσ, maybe keeping its specific trace of eagerness, and supposes that animals' specific zeal for procreation is just a metaphor for exhibiting this more general sense. Differently, Santas (1988), p 34 and Waterfield (1994), p. 86 suppose that at 206b Plato refers again to specific ἔρωσ or sexual passion so that cultural procreation would be a sort of 'sublimation' in a Freudian sense. I am nearer Rowe's understanding of the passage because I do not think that Eros/ἔρωσ can be a sublimation of inferior expressions to superior ones. But I would emphasize that biological procreation is, nevertheless, here meant as a humble expression of something which, even in this precarious form, is in a way divine. (On this point see Fierro (1999), p.148.)

<sup>92</sup> In other words ἔρωσ is always σπουδὴ or 'intense desire, eagerness' (208b6). On this passage see Dover (1980), p. 151.

### 3.3.3. Eros' ἔργα: different ways of working to obtain the good that we all desire

#### 3.3.3.1. Procreation in beauty: Eros' limited way of attaining his object of desire

Thus, we all are lovers of the good. Moreover, we all want to possess it forever and benefit from eternal happiness. In consequence, we all want to be immortal (and exist forever) so that this enjoyment might be endless. In short, we all want to be like the gods. However, as we have already seen, Eros (and each of us as subjects of desire) is originally limited in the pursuit of this ambition because of his innate deficiency and mortality. And here again he confronts his own limitations: immortality for the eternal possession of the good and happiness will be unattainable. In our actual existence, in contrast to the gods, who are always absolutely the same, this can only take place through perpetual replacement and substitution so that what perishes leaves behind something new:

τούτω γὰρ τῷ τρόπῳ πᾶν το θνητὸν σώζεται, οὐ παντάπασιν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ ὥσπερ τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τῷ τὸ ἀπιὸν καὶ παλαιούμενον ἕτερον νέον ἐγκαταλείπειν οἷον αὐτὸ ἦν. (208a7-b2; see also 207d2-e1)

This impulse to be immortal finds expression in the leaving behind of a new creature that, replacing the one who dies, confers immortality 'through another' (Hackforth:<sup>93</sup> 'vicarious' immortality). This tendency is already present in us just in virtue of our being alive, insofar as our somatic and psychical identity is retained only through a continual renewal of the components of our body and our soul (207d2-208b6). So, paradoxically, the mechanism for keeping alive and, even more, of attaining some kind of survival after death is not achieved, as the self-preservation instinct *sensu stricto* might imply, by the unfeasible ambition of

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<sup>93</sup> See Hackforth (1950).

holding what we have attained and possess at the present.<sup>94</sup> The continuance of life is made possible only by accepting the inevitable departure of any thing desired that has been obtained so that room –i.e. emptiness, lack- is left for both the re-emergence of desire and the resulting search for a substitute for the lost object. These departures are ‘small deaths’ -signs of our mortality- and in the case of defending one’s offspring at the price of one’s life may imply actual death.

The way in which this replacement takes place is by continuous procreation in what is beautiful so that creativity comes to be a necessary counterpart of life. As we have seen above in 3.3.2., Eros/ἔρως now involves our whole life and is directed to the good and happiness, though retaining his/its particular feature of being intense desire for beauty. In this way, the passion for procreating in beauty in order to attain immortality, which in principle exists in all of us, becomes a specific means by which possession of the good and happiness can be sought.<sup>95</sup>

**3.3.3.2. Different ways of attaining vicarious immortality and, alongside it, a certain possession of the good: procreation κατὰ τὸ σῶμα and procreation κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν. The speeches previous to Socrates’**

Although everybody is passionate for the good and happiness, we do not all understand it and look for it in the same way. As we are told at 205d3-5, people target it in different ways: some people focus their ἔρως on physical training, others on business, others on philosophy:

ἀλλ’οἱ μὲν ἄλλη τρεπόμενοι πολλαχῇ ἐπ’αὐτόν <i.e. τὸν ἐρώτα>, ἡ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμναστίαν ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν...

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<sup>94</sup> See Robin (1951), p. lxxxvi.

<sup>95</sup> See Robin (1951), p. lxxxiv, lxxxii.

Moreover, insofar as all of us “are fertile” (κυοῦσιν), i.e. can potentially procreate (τίκτειν) in a biological and/or cultural sense (206c1ff.), two different ways of trying to attain immortality by procreation in beauty and, in tandem with it, of possessing the good and happiness are available to all human beings: τόκος ἐν καλῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν (206b7-8). While most people focus their ἔρωσ on achieving immortality in relation to the body (208e1-5), others are passionate about becoming immortal through leaving behind works of culture and amazing deeds through which they gain undying memory and fame (209a1; see also 207c1-208e1). Thus, there are two main possible and different routes for the ‘current’ of desire or ἔρωσ which drives each one’s life. One does not exclude the other (since people can procreate biologically and also conceive of cultural objects); however, only one of them dominates. This implies that human beings can be of fundamentally two different types according to how they understand (at least unconsciously; they may not be aware of it) and, in fact pursue and passionately desire immortality as a requirement of the eternal possession of the good.

So, on the one hand, we have that ἔρωσ for immortality which is present in animals when they procreate, give birth and then take all kinds of risks in order to protect their progeny who will replace them after their death (207c9ff.). In a great part of human beings their ‘current’ of desire also ‘flows’ through the same channel so that men and women, being pregnant or fertile (κυῆσαι) in their bodies, are focused on begetting, giving birth (τίκτειν καὶ γεννᾶν)<sup>96</sup> in what is

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<sup>96</sup> According to Dover τίκτειν refers to the ejaculation of semen by the male and probably the emission of something like semen by the female in the moment of orgasm and not to “the complete process of creating a child” which would include what we normally call ‘pregnancy’ (Dover (1980), p. 147). However, Pender (1992) has shown that in Diotima’s speech Plato refers to four different kinds of pregnancy: two physical – a ‘female’ type (the normal state of pregnancy of a woman after intercourse) and a ‘male’ type (ejaculation) – and two spiritual, both of which are metaphors of the two types of physical pregnancy. Differently Brisson (1998), p. 65 thinks that “à



beautiful and harmonious so that they become, in a way, immortal through their offspring. It is in this sense, i.e. as a means of procreation, that sexual intercourse between man and woman turns out to be something divine. The beautiful medium would be in this case an attractive sexual partner.

On the other hand, there are some people who, being fecund in their souls, desire to engender illustrious deeds and cultural creations. All of what they do - formidable acts of virtue such as Alcestis' death for her husband, Achilles' for Patroclus or Codrus' on behalf of his children (208c1-d9); beautiful creations such as Homer's and Hesiod's poems (209c7-d4); Solon's and Lycurgus' beautiful laws and works (209d4-e4)- are a result of the desire of people who are inspired by φιλοτιμία (208c3) and expect to gain fame in this way and so become in a way immortal by surviving in the collective memory after their death (208c1-d2). Procreation (τόκος) also takes place at this level by contact and association with the beautiful (ἀπτόμενος γὰρ οἶμαι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ὁμιλῶν αὐτῷ, ἃ πάλαι ἐκύει τίκτει καὶ γεννᾷ, 209c2-3) and the 'children' (παῖδας, 209d1) are here spiritual productions.

The source of inspiration for these procreators (γεννητόρες, 209a4) is the physical and moral beauty possessed by an individual -whether this person is present or not (καὶ παρῶν καὶ ἀπῶν μεμνημένος, 209c3-4).

As both forms of procreation in beauty involve a certain attainment of immortality and so are, to a certain extent, divine, we must suppose that through them human beings at least come nearer to the possession of the good we all desire. This means that, insofar as desire for biological procreation in beauty is normally present in most human beings, all of us could achieve a minimum and certain attainment of

the good.<sup>97</sup> Creativity at a cultural level, from its lowest to its highest forms, offers an immortality of better quality and takes us even closer to the possession of the good (the 'offspring' is better and lasts for more time (209c); these men are god-like (θεῖος, 209b1)<sup>98</sup> and honoured as such after death (209e)). In this way the natural attraction that we all feel for beauty becomes a first 'bridge' to the divine inherent to every human being.

The benefits of Eros mentioned by the speakers previous to Socrates –the moral improvement of the lover and the beloved supported by Phaedrus and also by Pausanias in the form of homosexual love; the defence of medicine as an art concerning the ἔργον of the body and of the universe by Eryximachus; the etiology of human sexuality as a search for a lost unity traced by Aristophanes; the inspiration that love affairs but also poetry find in Eros (Agathon)- can be included in these two kinds of procreation in beauty, and the speakers themselves -especially the comedian Aristophanes, the poet Agathon, the physician Eryximachus- can also be described as spiritual progenitors of this sort. In a more general way all culture and creativity have to be seen as originating in human desire for immortality by procreation in beauty as a way of attaining the eternal possession of happiness and the good.

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<sup>97</sup> Since animals also look for biological immortality, there will be in them *something like* a tendency to the good. However, as animals either do not have reason or only an embryonic form of it, they cannot really desire the good (as it is reason which is able to recognize and desire the good). For this point see below **Chapter II, Section II, 1.2.1.1.2. Cognitive capacity required by the appetites**, pp. 130 ff..

<sup>98</sup> Burnet (1901) and Dover (1980) prefer the emmendation ἡθεος ('bachelor', 'unmarried') following Parmentier. But Bury (1932), Robin (1951), Vicaire (1989) and Rowe (1998) take θεῖος which comes in the papyrus and the manuscripts and fits better with the usual Platonic consideration of the poets –as well as of people like diviners, prophets and politicians- as individuals in a way inspired by the divinity but without knowledge (see *Men.* 99c cited by Bury (1932), p. 121; see also Rowe (1998), p.190; a similar idea at *Phaedr.* 244a ff.).

However, even all these spiritual expressions of procreation of wisdom and virtue still remain attached to the beauty present in an individual, the procreator not still being able to understand the unity of beauty and even less Beauty itself. Only if we follow Diotima further 'up', are procreation and attainment of immortality of a superior kind revealed, taking us as close as is humanly possible to the possession of the good and happiness: through a philosophical life, in which reason gains an increasing comprehension of the unity of Beauty so that the love for the truth receives maximum development, we may be able to glimpse eternal Beauty, attain the most perfect kind of vicarious immortality by procreating authentic virtue and, after death possibly gain a god-like immortality of the sort that Eros longs for. Thus φιλοσοφία or love of wisdom comes to be the truest expression of Love. Those who stay in the "Lesser Mysteries" only achieve procreation of what are, by contrast, "images of virtue", i.e. *a sort of* wisdom and virtue but not real knowledge and perfection.

### 3.4. True love: the erotic ascent to Beauty itself

#### 3.4.1. The Higher Mysteries

How reason's love for the truth can be developed is described by Diotima as an initiation into the higher Mysteries of love (τὰ...τέλεα ἐποπτικά 210a1), i.e. similar to the ἐποπτεία in which the sacred objects were presented to the initiated person in the Eleusinian mysteries.<sup>99</sup> In this way, the stages of education of the philosopher on the way to wisdom are presented as stipulated 'steps' toward a final revelation. The use of the metaphor and of the language of the mysteries also allows Plato to suggest that access to Beauty itself is not just the completion of a mere epistemological ambition but, simultaneously, an access to something

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<sup>99</sup> Several scholars have pointed out the use of the language of the mystery religions at *Symp.* 210a-212a (Cornford (1950), p. 77; Dover (1980), p. 155, O'Brien (1984) pp. 203-205 and cf. also his references to other scholars at p. 203 n. 49; Rowe (1998), pp. 192-194, Brisson (1998), pp. 65-71). The philosopher is also described as an initiated person in *Phaedr.* 249c and *Phaed.* 69b-c.

divine, which brings, along with knowledge, the maximum satisfaction of the desire for the good and happiness together with ‘first-rate’ immortality, i.e. an achievement of Eros’s object/s of desire as fully as is humanly possible. The erotic behaviour of ordinary people, who procreate in beauty in relation to the body or to the soul, constitutes a preliminary ‘step’ or a stage of “Lesser Mysteries” that precede this higher initiation,<sup>100</sup> should this conduct be understood in the “correct way” (εἴαν τις ὀρθῶς μετίη, 210a2),<sup>101</sup> i.e. as a first attempt to find immortality in order to possess the good forever and, in conjunction with this, happiness (in other words, in order to be like the gods). The representation of a full development of a philosophical life through the image of the mysteries also makes it possible to introduce the idea that only people especially qualified are able to undergo it.<sup>102</sup>

### 3.4.2. The erotic ascent: stages previous to the contemplation of beauty itself.

The ascent can be seen as erotic for two reasons: firstly, the ἔρως that inspires this lover operates as usual out of lack of its object of desire: in this case, wisdom; secondly, the passage through each ‘step’ and progress to the next one is attained through natural attraction to beauty and love for the good. The passion for attaining full wisdom is what keeps this lover moving to the following stage since the comprehension of what beauty is, achieved in the stages previous to the contemplation of Beauty itself, proves to be incomplete. However, desire for the truth is not enough for this ascent to the knowledge of Beauty itself: reason’s

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<sup>100</sup> ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικά ἴσως, ὡς Σώκρατες, κἂν σὺ μνηθεΐης (209e5-210a2) implies that the works of Eros described in the preceding part can be taken as a prelude of the “Higher Mysteries”.

<sup>101</sup> Although this conditional can also refer to the correct comprehension of the person initiated in the higher mysteries.

<sup>102</sup> Diotima (actually Socrates) establishes this idea from the beginning: τὰ δὲ τέλεα ἐποπτικά...οὐκ οἶδ’ εἰ οἷος τ’ ἂν εἴη (210a1-2). It is also expressed through the fact that the grasp of Beauty itself depends on the eventual fulfilment of certain conditions and on the execution of certain prescriptions (cf. Fierro (2001b) pp. 32-33).

cognitive function as well its desire for the truth are required in order to generalize, and so identify the unity of beauty at each level and stimulate the desire for knowledge by showing new possible objects of love.<sup>103</sup> In other words, this lover is a philosopher. Since this love is what takes someone nearest to the attainment of the object of desire of all human beings -the good, happiness and a god-like immortality as a requirement for the other two-, φιλοσοφία turns out to be the most authentic expression of ἔρως, which is naturally again an 'intermediate' and 'intermediary' between the mortal and the immortal, the human and the divine realms. The subject who carries out the ascent is an initiated youth, who is helped by a tutor -an advanced philosopher- who correctly leads him up the *scala amoris* (210a).

The steps of the *scala amoris* are:

a) Physical beauty: ...ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα...(211c3-4). The entrance to the first stage is, when young, through attraction to beautiful bodies (καλὰ σώματα, 210a6). The mere attraction to physical beauty is quite common in everybody –in fact we have seen in the “Lesser Mysteries” that most people feel attracted to beautiful bodies and desire to procreate in them. The difference is that, under the guidance of his tutor, the initiated lover only procreates beautiful discourses (λόγους καλοῦς, 210a8) -without having sexual intercourse with the beloved- and that he extends his love for a single beautiful body to many of them. In this way, he arrives at the understanding that the beauty manifested in all the bodies is “one and the same” (ἐν τε καὶ ταὐτόν, 210b3) and despises the passion for one body, so that a sort of ‘disindividualization’ of physical love takes place.<sup>104</sup> The recognition of what the beauty of bodies is may consist in the understanding of what makes any body beautiful –the appropriate proportions that make a body harmonious and graceful,

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<sup>103</sup> See Moravcsik (1971), pp. 288 and 290.

<sup>104</sup> See Robin (1951), p. lciiii and Nussbaum (1986), pp. 179-181.

for example- and in the λόγοι that express this understanding in words. In a more general sense it can be considered a sort of aesthetic education.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the most valuable lesson for starting to develop a philosophical mind is the comprehension that beauty is something beyond the particular bodies.

b) Beauty of the soul and of habits and activities: ...ἀπὸ καλῶν σωμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα... (211c4-5). In the next stage of his erotic-philosophical education the lover learns to value the beauty of the soul as being superior to physical beauty.<sup>106</sup> In order to procreate beautiful speeches that can make young men better<sup>107</sup> he needs αὖ θεάσασθαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλὸν καὶ τοῦτ' ἰδεῖν ὅτι πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ συγγενές ἐστιν (210c3-5). This might mean that in order to understand better what makes an individual virtuous -and so beautiful in relation to his soul-, he needs to comprehend in a more general way what kind of laws and activities for a community can promote this individual perfection and what kind of beauty they would need to have in common.<sup>108</sup> At the end of this stage the lover probably goes beyond his attachment to individual physical beauty (see ...τὸ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καλὸν σμικρὸν τι ἡγήσεται εἶναι, 210c5-6) and so is ready to move to a more abstract level. However, this does not mean that he rejects physical beauty but just that he values and understands it in the light of a more spiritual beauty.

c) Beauty of the sciences: ...ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα... (211c5-6). Now the lover needs to consider different kinds of knowledge in order to understand the beauty that is inherent in them (ἐπιστημῶν

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<sup>105</sup> See Robin (1951), pp. xcii and xciii and Moravcsik (1971).

<sup>106</sup> Some physical beauty is still needed at least so that the lover does not find the beloved repulsive: ...εἰάν ἐπεικῆς ὢν τὴν ψυχὴν τις καὶ σμικρὸν ἄνθος ἔχη... (210b8-c1).

<sup>107</sup> The young men that become better through these words at 210c2-3 can include the lover as well as his beloved (in case he is a young man as well). The beloved has to be potentially a virtuous person in order to possess the kind of beauty that the lover will learn at this stage to appreciate.

<sup>108</sup> Similarly Robin (1951), p. xciii.

κάλλος, 210c7), i.e. what constitutes each of them as sciences or their perfection as such. This leads him to a comprehension of the immense beauty common to all of them (πρὸς πολὺ ...τὸ καλόν, 210c7-d1), i.e. of what makes them, in a more general way, sciences. This comprehension of the excellence of sciences in general makes him definitively abandon the understanding of beauty through particular instances (see 210d1-3: ...μηκέτι τὸ παρ' ἐνί, ὥσπερ οἰκέτης, ἀγαπῶν παιδαρίου κάλλος ἢ ἀνθρώπου τινὸς ἢ ἐπιτηδεύματος ἑνός, δουλεύων φαῦλος ἢ καὶ σμικρολόγος...). Nevertheless, this does not mean that he leaves either physical beauty outside his scope of understanding or, especially, beauty of soul and of laws and institutions (i.e. the previous stages) but that he acquires a new -better- comprehension of them from a wider point of view. The beautiful discourses and magnificent thoughts that are procreated at this level (πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς...διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνω, 210d5-6) must refer to the intellectual developments made by the lover in relation to the beauty of the sciences in general. “ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ” seems to indicate that at this stage the lover has arrived at a more complete development of a philosophical mind in which he is able to operate with different kinds of sciences and understand the kinship between them.

Especially after this last stage, the lover has developed and fortified his rational capacity for understanding the unity of beauty and the desire for wisdom that propels this enterprise. He is now prepared for the final stage: the revelation of the science of Beauty itself.

His spontaneous attraction to beauty and desire for wisdom have facilitated the whole progress. However, all the previous stages by which the lover achieves contemplation of Beauty itself are described as “toils” (οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι, 210e6). Thus the erotic ascent, though inspired by the best kind of passion, implies a life of arduous toil in order to catch a possible glimpse of the Beauty

which the philosopher longs for. As the old proverb asserts: χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ (See *Hi.Ma.* 304e8).<sup>109</sup>

### 3.4.3. The science of Beauty itself

...ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐπ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ μάθημα τελευτήσει, ὃ ἐστὶν [...] τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα... (211c6-8)

#### 3.4.3.1. The Idea of Beauty itself

At the end of the ascent the lover/philosopher finally arrives at the object of his labours: a knowledge unique of its kind (μίαν τοιαύτην, 210d7), being above the other sciences, and having as its object what is beautiful in itself. From 210e we find an extensive description of what the Idea of Beauty would be like<sup>110</sup> and especially of what it would *not* be like.

a) Pureness and 'disindividualization' of the Idea: The things that are beautiful (τὰ καλὰ) do not have beauty as their single property: because of being individual things, they necessarily are a 'bundle' of properties<sup>111</sup>. Only the Idea of Beauty, which is in no way instantiated (οὐδ' αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει, οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη, οὐδέ που ὃν ἐν ἑτέρῳ τινί, οἷον ἐν ζώῳ ἢ ἐν γῇ ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῳ..., 211a5-b1), is *uniquely* beautiful and, in this sense, pure and perfectly beautiful. For the same reason Beauty itself, being non-instantiated, is absolute: it is beautiful in every

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<sup>109</sup> Thus, I agree with D. Frede (1993), pp. 409 ff. that in the *Symposium* Plato introduces beauty as something that can awaken in everybody the desire for the good but I disagree in that the task of looking for the good that we all desire is, in consequence, out of enchantment and without effort – in opposition of the *Republic*. The difficulty of pursuing the real good is stressed in the *Symposium*, especially in relation to the philosopher.

<sup>110</sup> See Nehamas (1999), p. 303. He says that here we find the most vivid and extensive description of a Platonic Form.

<sup>111</sup> See McCabe (1994), pp. 131-161.



way (οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ' αἰσχρόν; ...οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν..., 211a2), it does not vary according to time (...τοτὲ μὲν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ, 211a3) or place (οὐδ' ἐνθα μὲν καλόν, ἐνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν, 211a4) or, indeed, according to who is judging the thing as beautiful (ὥς τισὶ μὲν ὄν καλόν, τισὶ δὲ αἰσχρόν, 211a4-5). Thus, Beauty itself is beautiful and this is without qualification, while particular beautiful things are only beautiful in relative or qualified terms.<sup>112</sup>

b) Identity and immutability of the Idea: The Idea of Beauty is eternal and uniform, remaining always the same without alterations (ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον... μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν, 211a1-b1). In this sense it is by itself (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ...ὄν, 211b1). The Idea does not suffer any alteration as a result of the participation of the beautiful things (πάντα καλὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα τρόπον τινὰ τοιοῦτον, οἷον γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων μήτε τι πλεον μήτε ἔλαττον γίνεσθαι μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδέν, 211b2-5).

c) The divine character of the Idea: The features of the Idea of Beauty are summarized at 211e1-4 and at the same time its unique and divine character is underlined: ...αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν ἰδεῖν εἰλικρινές, καθαρὸν, ἄμεικτον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀνάπλεων σαρκῶν τε ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ χρωμάτων καὶ ἄλλης πολλῆς φλυαρίας θνητῆς, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν δύναιτο μονοειδὲς κατιδεῖν.

In short this science of Beauty itself is presented as only attainable with great efforts after all previous steps have been undergone and described as a sudden

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<sup>112</sup> The difference would be that in the form of Beauty the predicate 'beautiful' would apply without qualification, while it would be applied with qualification to the instances of beauty (on this point see Moravcsik (1971)). This takes us into the issue of self-predication of the Forms. I will not consider this problem since it is out of the scope of the aims of our discussion here.

revelation of something which is not only uniform, identical, pure and common to all kinds of beautiful things -like a an Aristotelian universal- but also wonderful (ἐξαίφνης κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστόν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, 210e4-5) and divine (τὸ θεῖον καλόν 211e3). Nevertheless, what exactly the connection of the previous steps is with this final stage from an epistemological point of view, what each of the stages in fact consists in and what kind of relation exists between the beautiful particulars and Beauty itself remains an unsolved mystery in this text.

### 3.4.3.2. Beauty and Goodness

From the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon on, the good has been presented alongside beauty as the object of Eros/ἔρως. At 204e1ff. (see also 206a3ff.), in fact, the good replaces beauty, which becomes a medium of procreation for the attainment of immortality, happiness and permanent possession of the good. However, here in the erotic ascent, the object of love is again clearly presented as beautiful things and, above all, as Beauty itself. Although the exact relationship between the good and the beautiful is never established, a tentative interpretation does nevertheless seem to be required. For this purpose I will briefly take into account what other texts suggest on this point.

In *Rep.* 6.508e3-509a7 beauty is an attribute of knowledge and truth, which have the Form of the Good as their cause, but, above all and to a higher degree, is an aspect of the Good:

-[τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέαν] αἰτίαν δ' ἐπιστήμης οὖσαν καὶ ἀληθείας, ὥς γινωσκομένης μὲν διανοοῦ, οὕτω δὲ καλῶν ἀμφοτέρων ὄντων, γνώσεώς τε καὶ ἀληθείας, ἄλλο καὶ κάλλιον ἔτι τούτων ἡγούμενος αὐτὸ [i.e. τὸ ἀγαθόν] ὁρθῶς ἡγήση· [...]

-ἀμήχανον κάλλος [...] λέγεις, εἰ ἐπιστήμην μὲν καὶ ἀλήθειαν παρέχει, αὐτὸ δ' ὑπὲρ ταῦτα κάλλει ἐστίν.<sup>113</sup>

This implies that, although the Good cannot be reduced to what is beautiful, everything beautiful has to be good in order to be considered really beautiful.

In *Phaedr.* 250b5-6 Beauty is referred to as the only Form which stands out because of its blaze (see κάλλος... λαμπρόν) when we, being in a disembodied condition and following the gods in their revolutions through the heavens, have caught some sight of them in the place above the heavens. In consequence, Beauty is also here, in our incarnate existence, the most visible of things (see *Phaedr.* 250c-d). As emphasised, a few lines later, Beauty of all Forms has the privilege of being ἐκφανέστατον... καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον (*Phaedr.* 250d7-8).

If we take these passages from the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* together, everything seems to suggest that Beauty would be a gleaming, resplendent *aspect* of what is good and really exists. In the *Symposium* beauty is what awakens attraction. This erotic attraction to what is beautiful is, in fact, part of a generic desire for the eternal possession of the good in the following way: the attraction to beauty derives, in fact, from passion for procreating in it; through this procreation, the subject of desire attains a vicarious immortality and so *a kind of* permanent possession of the good. In other words the ἔρως for beauty contributes to the attainment of what is good insofar as procreation in beauty assists us in the attainment of the good universally desired.

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<sup>113</sup> “... you must conceive it [i.e. the Form of the Good] as being the cause of knowledge, and of truth in so far as known. Yet fair as they both are, knowledge and truth, in supposing it to be something fairer still than these you will think rightly of it. [...] -An inconceivable beauty you speak of [...] if it is the source of knowledge and truth, and yet it surpasses them in beauty.” (I follow here Shorey’s translation).

For the above reasons it can be concluded that when we feel attracted to something beautiful and pursue it, we are also, albeit unawares, pursuing something good. This ostensible attraction to beauty and the enthusiasm it awakens in us for its pursuit is what Plato seems to register as a natural auxiliary to the universal search for the good. But this natural attraction is not however sufficient if we want to come as near as possible to the attainment of the good: a rigorous training of reason is required in tandem with it if we wish to have access to higher levels of beauty and, concomitantly, of the good.

Thus, if we accept that everything which is beautiful has to be good, when in the erotic ascent the lover-philosopher comprehends the single beauty common to all beautiful bodies, he also understands their goodness or perfection: i.e. what makes them beautiful *qua* perfect. Similarly at the stage of understanding the beauty of soul and habits and activities, he would understand what makes souls, habits and activities beautiful *qua* perfect. And once again at the stage of discernment the beauty of sciences, the initiated person would realize what makes the sciences beautiful *qua* perfect. This explains why, although what is generalized and identified by reason is the same at all levels, i.e. the unity of beauty, some levels are harder than others and, in fact, it may take a whole life to understand them. It also means that, if someone catches a glimpse of Beauty itself, he not only understands what makes all different kinds of things beautiful but also what makes them perfect.

#### **3.4.3.3. The Idea of Beauty as ethical principle: wisdom and virtue**

But why are the attainment of the knowledge of Beauty -the most visible aspect of the Good- and all the efforts that that presupposes so important? The answer is the typical Socratic one: all of us desire the real good but only those who *know* what this is can attain it.<sup>114</sup> This answer, translated in erotic terms in the *Symposium*, is

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<sup>114</sup> In Socrates' preliminary conversation with Lysis it is also suggested that in order for Lysis to become able to do whatever he wants and be happy, he has to become wise (*Lys.* 208e4 ff.). This

as follows: all of us feel attracted to beauty and want to procreate in it and thus attain an immortality that enables us to achieve eternal possession of the good and happiness. However, only those who are able to *know* Beauty itself can procreate real virtue and not just “images” of it, thus getting as near as possible in this life to the attainment of the real good, and of happiness. This means that a subject able constantly to produce real virtue would be someone who has been able not only to undergo the first stage of the erotic ascent, so that he understands what is beautiful (and good) for the body and the soul (i.e. for the individual). He has also been able to move to the next stage and enlighten himself as to what habits and activities are beautiful (and good) for the community and, afterwards, to move further ‘up’ and understand, in a more general way, what is beautiful (and good) in the context of the sciences and finally to attain the knowledge of Beauty itself. Thus his life will consist in virtuous acts procreated in the light of this knowledge, whereas people who do not develop their passion for the truth remain attached to beautiful instances and cannot differentiate them from Beauty itself and consequently they do not always procreate in the most appropriate way and in the most appropriate medium. If they do perform virtuous acts, they do it by chance and not out of knowledge. In this sense they are able to produce only “images of virtue” by comparison with what the philosopher is able to procreate (authentic virtue founded on knowledge). This would be the case of the different kinds of creators mentioned at 208e5ff. and also of poets like Aristophanes<sup>115</sup> or Agathon who, in a way, have reported some things which are true about Eros but, because of their lack of knowledge, fail to understand when and why they speak the truth.

In this way a progressive enlightenment of reason, allowing the truth of what is really beautiful (and good) to be attained depends on a parallel development of the desire for the truth so that this ‘current’ of desire may finally gain control over our lives. As we have seen above, ἔρως is a force that dominates and determines our

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will make of him an optimum subject of desire (he will do what he wants) and, at the same time, an optimum object of desire since, being wise, he will be good and useful in human terms (*Lys.* 210e).

<sup>115</sup> For more on this point see Fierro (1999), pp. 147-148.

whole life but flows in different ways in different human beings: some have their life dominated by a physical passion; others by a creative passion with the aim of obtaining fame and honour. If someone is to have his life dominated by passion for the truth and so get as close as possible to the attainment of the real good through the wisdom that he may obtain at the end of the road, this needs a long development of the kind described in the erotic ascent. In this way Plato transforms the hermeneutic of desire in such a way that our realization as subjects of desire -i.e. in the attainment of what we want- depends upon understanding ourselves as subjects who desire the truth above all.<sup>116</sup>

#### **3.4.3.4. Human limitations in our actual existence on the access to the Idea of Beauty itself**

In contrast to the *Phaedo*, where the possibility of full attainment of truth in this life seems to be denied (see *Phaed.* 65a9-66b7), and in accordance with the *Republic* where the philosopher, as he leaves the cavern, contemplates the “sun” -i.e. the Good- (*Rep.* 516b4-7), the *Symposium* clearly asserts the possibility of knowledge of Beauty itself in this life.<sup>117</sup>

The attainment of this knowledge seems, nevertheless, to have limits. First of all, in earlier steps of the argument it has been established that a) Eros’ prospective structure makes him deficient in relation to the future insofar as, even if he attains what he desires in the present, there is no guarantee that he will also attain it in the future (200b9-e6); b) because of his lacking-Πενία condition, Eros is constantly obtaining and losing his object of desire (203e2-4) so that his characteristic ἔργα have to consist in perpetually replacing what is constantly lost through procreation (207c8ff). c) Moreover knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) that has already been acquired requires continuous replacement through the exercise of memory in order to be

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<sup>116</sup> See Part Five: “True Love” of Foucault (1985), pp. 228-246.

<sup>117</sup> See 211d1-3, 211e4, 211b5-6 and 211c9-d1.

kept integral in our minds (208a1-7). Thus, even in his access to Beauty itself, the philosopher-as-lover must be constrained by these limitations. d) The term ἐξαίφνης (210e4) used to describe the “sudden” vision of Beauty indicates a temporal point of view of how the attainment of wisdom is both possible and limited: On the one hand, it refers to the abrupt move into an eternal reality where we lose our temporal limitations. However, for us as human beings and merely deficient subjects of desire this access to eternity only lasts for a moment: only the divine exists forever and is always identical to itself (208a8-b1).<sup>118</sup> Moreover, at this level, Eros keeps operating by procreation (and thus by constant replacement of the object through which immortality and possession of the good are attained). However, the ‘offspring’ is of a superior kind: real virtue and not images of it. In short, *full* possession of the object of love at least in our actual existence is not possible.

However, in spite of these limitations, there are many suggestions that the knowledge of Beauty that takes place in this life has certain degree of permanence (ἵνα<sup>118bis</sup> γυνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν. ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, [...] εἶπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπων, θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, 211d1-3; φαῦλον βίον, 211e4; ὅταν δὴ τις [...] ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλὸν ἀρχηται καθορᾶν, 211b5-6; ...ἵνα<sup>118bis</sup> γυνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν, 211c9-d1). This seems difficult to reconcile with the above. An illustrative example from the *Meno* 97aff., which is used in that dialogue to trace the difference between ἐπιστήμη and ὀρθὴ δόξα, may be of help in understanding this. In that

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<sup>118</sup> On this interpretation of ἐξαίφνης in correlation with μόγις as different ways in which Plato refers to both the possibility of knowledge and its limitations see Steinthal (1993). Similarly in Aristotle while God is *always* happy by enjoying his being νοήσις νοήσεως, human beings only enjoy this condition *sometimes* (*Met.* XII, vii, 1072b). Velásquez (1986) suggests that the ἐξαίφνης indicates that the contemplation of Beauty itself is something radically different from the kind of understanding achieved in the previous levels.

<sup>118bis</sup> ἵνα Lamb, Dover; ἵνα καὶ Bury; καὶ Burnet (following the the mss.).

dialogue we are told that, while ὁρθὴ δόξα cannot refer to an αἰτία in order to justify its rightness, ἐπιστήμη implies both the possession of right beliefs and reference to a justification of them. This justification is compared with the situation in which someone is able to say what the road to Larisa is like because he has actually walked it, whereas the person with ὁρθὴ δόξα would be like someone who describes the road in terms of what someone else has told him. Similarly, the philosopher who has contemplated Beauty itself can always refer his comprehension and behaviour to it, even if he cannot keep contemplating it, because he has actually followed the stages of the erotic ascent and caught sight of this reality (out of time and always existent). However, because of the limitations which have been highlighted above, even the philosopher who has arrived at the end of his journey will need to go on repeating at least part of his journey. Nevertheless, with the help of the marks of his previous itinerary, his path to a new direct contact with what is really beautiful and good might be easier for him. Thus, as even the attainment of an eternal reality is not permanent, there is no annihilation of ἔρως 'lacking condition';<sup>119</sup> for at least in this life, a final completion and unending fulfilment of its lacking condition is unattainable for human beings.

#### **3.4.3.5. Immortality through procreation in Beauty and eschatological godlike immortality for the philosopher at *Symp.* 212a2-7**

As shown above at 3.3.3.1. and 3.3.3.2, although everybody desires immortality as a means of attaining eternal possession of the good and, alongside it, happiness, Diotima teaches Socrates that, at least in our present existence, we are able to attain only *a sort of* immortality, which consists in procreation (τόκος) or

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<sup>119</sup> By contrast Robin (1951), p. xcvi and ch. 2 of Rist (1964), pp. 16-55 (see esp. pp. 31-34) think that, after contemplating Beauty itself, ἔρως becomes overflowing love. Similarly Osborne (1994), especially in chapters 3 and 4, pp. 52-116. See also her criticism to Vlastos and Nygren, pp. 222-226 and Armstrong (1961) and (1964).



generation (γέννησις) in beauty so that we leave behind a biological or spiritual replacement of ourselves.

But in dialogues like the *Phaedo*,<sup>120</sup> Plato maintains that proper immortality, i.e. the soul's continuing to exist on its own when after death we stop being a compound of soul and body, is also open to us. He distinguishes there basically two kinds of immortality: a) ordinary eschatological immortality, which consists in a shadowy existence of an inferior degree after death and is open to all human beings, except the philosopher; b) a god-like immortality which consists in an existence to a higher degree after death in company with the Ideas and belongs only to the philosopher.

There has been a big debate about what kind or kinds of immortality are meant at *Symp.* 212a2-7,<sup>121</sup> once the lover has attained contemplation of Beauty itself. The passage at issue says:

ἢ οὐκ ἐνθυμῇ [...] ὅτι ἐνταῦθα αὐτῷ μοναχοῦ γενήσεται, ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν, τίκτειν οὐκ εἰδῶλα ἀρετῆς, ἅτε οὐκ εἰδῶλου ἐφαπτομένῳ, ἀλλὰ ἀληθῇ, ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ· τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῇ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἰπέρ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ;<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> For more on this point in the *Phaedo* see Fierro (2001a), 27-30. On the different kinds of immortality in the *Republic*, see **Chapter 2, Section IV**, pp. 244 ff. and **Conclusion**, pp. 270 ff..

<sup>121</sup> The statement of the *status quaestionis* here is a reduced version of Fierro (2001a), 32-34.

<sup>122</sup> "Or do you not recognize [...] that it is under these conditions alone, as he [the lover] sees beauty with what has the power to see it, that he will succeed in bringing to birth, not phantoms of virtue, because he is not grasping a phantom but true virtue, because he is grasping the truth; and, that when he has given birth to and nurtured true virtue, it belongs to him to be loved by the gods, and to him, if to any human being, to be immortal?" (Rowe's translation).

In the first part of the twentieth century scholars tended to take for granted that at *Symp.* 212a2-7 Plato was alluding to an eschatological immortality for the philosopher similar to the one described in the *Phaedo*.<sup>123</sup> But in 1950 Hackforth challenged this view and, through a more faithful analysis of the text, underlined that in the passage at issue Diotima describes the philosopher's activity just as *procreation* (γέννησις or τόκος) in beauty and so in the same terms that she described immortality in the previous part of the speech. Since, in addition to this, Hackforth does not find any reference to the eschatological immortality described in the *Phaedo*, he goes so far as to conclude that "Plato had come to feel doubts about the validity of that final argument for the soul's immortality" in the *Phaedo* and so had a "relapse into temporary scepticism" about personal eschatological immortality, together with the doctrine of ἀνάμνησις on which it is partly grounded. It is for this reason that in later works -*Republic X*, *Phaedrus*, *Laws*- Plato would have adduced other arguments in order to prove that the soul is immortal.<sup>124</sup>

Hackforth's interpretation has had a fundamental influence on all interpretations of this passage of the *Symposium* after him. In general scholars have tended, at least partially, to agree with him, although some have introduced variations to Hackforth's extreme conclusion about a period of scepticism in Plato on this point.<sup>125</sup> Luce maintains that at 212a2-7 "immortality in eternity", i.e. eschatological god-like immortality of the kind that appears in the *Phaedo* is "latent but not abandoned".<sup>126</sup> O'Brien<sup>126bis</sup> asserts that literal and godlike

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<sup>123</sup> See especially Bury (1932), pp. xlv-xlvi. However, Bury also pointed out that in the *Symposium* immortality of the soul in the sense of the *Phaedo* or the *Phaedrus* is not expressly stated.

<sup>124</sup> Hackforth (1950), p. 45. Hackforth (1955), p. 21, in spite of the criticisms received, some years later still maintains his position.

<sup>125</sup> So Morrison (1964), p. 44.

<sup>126</sup> Luce (1952), p. 140. See for a similar position Guthrie (1975), pp. 387-392, Dover (1980), pp. 149-150 and also Rowe (1998), pp. 184-185.

<sup>126bis</sup> O'Brien (1984), 199-201.

immortality as a prize from the gods is meant at *Symp.* 212a2-7.<sup>127</sup> In his recent translation of the *Symposium* Gill also says that at 212a2-7 an eschatological immortality for the philosopher of the kind that is described in *Phaedo* is suggested, but “as a bare possibility” and as “a product of an extended process by which the mind or soul becomes purified from the body”.<sup>128</sup> However, Hackforth’s thesis is still defended nowadays, as for example by Sedley.<sup>129</sup>

In short we can say that two interpretations of the text are open to us:

- a) On the one hand, Diotima says that, at the end of the erotic ascent, when the lover of wisdom catches sight of Beauty itself, he *procreates* (τίκτειν) in it. This coincides with the description of immortality *through procreation* in beauty that has been precisely defined in the rest of Diotima’s speech.
- b) On the other hand, the lover who reaches this final step in the erotic ascent is in contact with αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν (211d3; 211e1; 211e3), ὃ ἔστι καλόν (211c8-9), which is *eternal* by being uniform, unchangeable and by itself,<sup>130</sup> non-spatial,<sup>131</sup> pure, clean, unmixed<sup>132</sup> and thus different from beautiful particulars.<sup>133</sup> So he is in

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<sup>127</sup> Evangeliou criticizes severely Hackforth’s proposal (cf. especially Evangeliou (1985), pp. 209-211) but not with very happy arguments. It will be clear from my discussion how I diverge from him.

<sup>128</sup> Gill (1999), p.xliv, n. 65 and pp. 79-80 nn. 123 and 125. See also Waterfield (1994), p. 90.

<sup>129</sup> Sedley (1999), p.310 n.2 says, as Hackforth does, that Diotima’s account does not leave any room for belief in an immortal soul but he adds that Diotima’s exposition must not be assumed to be identical to Plato’s view.

<sup>130</sup> ...αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μεθ’ αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν... (211b1-2).

<sup>131</sup> ...οὐδὲ που ὄν ἐν ἑτέρῳ τινι, οἷον ἐν ζώῳ ἢ ἐν γῇ ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἢ ἐν τῷ ἄλλῳ... (211a9-b1).

<sup>132</sup> ...εἰλικρινές, καθαρόν, ἄμεικτον... (211e1).

<sup>133</sup> ...οὐδ’αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει... (211a5-7).

contact with a Form that has all the characteristics of the Forms in the *Phaedo*,<sup>134</sup> which might be seen as bearing upon the possibility of his achieving the highest kind of eschatological immortality that is described in this dialogue (and not just the survival through reincarnation that is available to all human souls according to the *Phaedo*).

Some interpreters have thought that only a) is justified in this passage; whilst others propose that both a) and b) can be defended. I claim, however, that it is the case that both kinds of immortality are meant in this passage. The claim itself is not new but I think I have a decisive argument, one which is predominantly founded on a consideration of the Greek text at 212a2-7 (especially of the use of tenses).

a) In 212a2-5 we read:

ἡ οὐκ ἐνθυμῇ [...] ὅτι ἐνταῦθα αὐτῷ μοναχοῦ γενήσεται, ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν, τίκτειν οὐκ εἰδῶλα ἀρετῆς, ἅτε οὐκ εἰδώλου ἐφαπτομένῳ, ἀλλὰ ἀληθῇ, ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ...;

Here Plato clearly refers to an immortality which consists in the replacement through procreation in beauty of what is lost (2.2.2). This is how, as has been previously established, ἔρως of the beautiful comes to be for the eternal possession of the good (cf. 204e-205a) and, as a consequence, for immortality (cf.

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<sup>134</sup> In *Phaed.* 65d4-8 it is asserted that "something just itself, something beautiful, something good" exist. Each of these things (the equal itself, the beautiful itself, i.e. what each thing is) is unvarying and constant, never admits change and is uniform and by itself, is invisible and known only by reasoning (78d1-79a5). This dimension of reality is also described as the pure, the everlasting, the immortal and changeless (79d2). For a good summary of the so-called 'theory of Forms' in the *Phaedo* cf. Gallop (1975), pp. 93-97. In the *Symposium* Beauty itself always exists, identical to itself, immutable, absolute, pure, uniform; and so it is essentially and necessarily eternal.

206e-207a). However, as we have seen, it is not possible for the lover to possess the good for ever and to acquire full immortality -i.e. to be always absolutely the same, in the way that the divine is (cf. 208 a8-b1): he can only attain a precarious immortality –as it is only a vicarious one- through procreation in beauty (cf. 206b-209e) either according to the body or, better, according to the soul. At 212a2-5 Diotima adds that, if someone contemplates the Beautiful, the production of true virtue (not images of it) will come to be a fact -γενήσεται- for him, insofar as he grasps true Beauty (instead of a phantom of it). The infinitive *τίκτειν* and the participles *ὄρωντι* and *ἐφαπτομένῳ* are in the continuous aspect, which means that the actions are in the process of happening at the same time as the action of the main verb. As a consequence, this production of true virtue must be a process that takes place together with the grasping of true Beauty. Then the initiated person who completes the erotic ascent, like all human beings, has immortality just through procreation and constant replacement, although it is a best kind of immortality because the product -true virtue- is, by comparison, better than the “image” of virtue (i.e. virtue not founded on knowledge) which might be produced by ordinary men. In fact, this initiatory experience can be understood as a sort of anticipation of the real god-like immortality that might be attained by the philosopher after death.

b) In 212a5-7 we read:

τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ  
γενέσθαι, καὶ εἶπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ;

Here we find aorist participles being connected with a verb in the present indicative tense (*ὑπάρχει*), which expresses the end point of these actions in the past.<sup>135</sup> This means that only *after* someone has produced (*τεκόντι*) and nurtured (*θρεψαμένῳ*) true virtue, does it belong to him, if to any human being,

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<sup>135</sup> See Goodwin (1966) Section 143 (p. 48): “the aorist participle generally represents an action as past with reference to the time of its leading verb”.

γενέσθαι θεοφιλῆς and ἀθάνατος.<sup>136</sup> This ἀθανασία comes about for the initiated -the philosopher who has grasped Beauty itself- *after* the production of true virtue (i.e. *after* the immortality through procreation which is open to him). Insofar as in the *Phaedo* Plato says that those who *in life* have been initiated (69c6-7) and have been “lovers of truth” (68a7-b1) are the only ones who *after death* attain the best kind of existence (i.e. an existence in which the soul is by itself, lives with the gods, is in contact with the Forms and achieves an immortality which is superior to a just survival through reincarnation), it seems highly likely to be this very kind of existence after death for the philosopher that Diotima is referring to in *Symp.* 212a5-7.

Nevertheless, what this god-like immortality consists in remains unexplained in the *Symposium*. The eschatological myth of Book 10 of the *Republic* offers more enlightenment on this point.

#### 3.4.3.6. Generosity of indigent ἔρως

One classical reflection on Plato’s theory of love suggests that ἔρως inspires acts out of selfishness, insofar as its works are carried out in order to provide at least a provisional satiation of its innate emptiness. In contrast to this, the Christian concept of ἀγάπη is a generous love through which a human being gives himself to the other and to God in imitation of God’s amorous and giving gesture to human beings.<sup>137</sup> Following a similar line, Plato’s love has been accused of taking individuals simply as a ‘means’ for the satisfaction of its lacking condition or as

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<sup>136</sup> θεοφιλῆς γενέσθαι (rather than εἶναι) suggests that the godlike immortality of the philosopher is a prize from the gods that he attains because he has previously gained their friendship through having a virtuous life (see O’Brien (1984), pp. 198-201).

<sup>137</sup> The classical text for this concept of ἀγάπη is St. Paul’s *First Letter to the Corinthians*, 13. This criticism to Plato’s concept of love had already been pointed out fundamentally by Nygren (1932-1939).

mere 'steps' for access to the contemplation of Beauty itself.<sup>138</sup> Some interpreters try to redeem Platonic love by discerning a transformation of Eros' indigent condition following the contemplation of Beauty itself, a transformation of such a kind that it becomes generous in a god-like way as does love in the Christian ἀγάπη.<sup>139</sup> However, if as proposed above, Eros/ἔρως fails to get rid of his lacking condition even after the eventual achievement of the knowledge of Beauty itself, the notion of his transformation in an 'overflowing' love has to be discarded.

However it would seem that an evaluation of the theory of Eros in the *Symposium* with categories such as 'selfishness' and 'generosity' as contrary concepts misses the point of Plato's proposal. If it were true, as Diotima/Socrates says, that we are fundamentally subjects of desire, it is useless to disqualify as "selfishness" the fact that we act out of our need to fill our primitive emptiness, for what other thing could we do if our essential constitution is such that we are always deficient of something? On the other hand, this deficient condition does not prevent generosity. As we have seen above, according to Plato's theory of ἔρως, *because* as subjects of desire *we do not have*, it is necessary for us to procreate i.e. to gain some permanence by leaving behind ourselves productions for our benefit but especially for the benefit of others (and this even at the cost of one's own life in some cases, as in the case of the animals that defend their "offspring" with their life or Alcestis and Achilles dying for their loved ones). This concept of 'generosity', is, nevertheless, completely different from that of ἀγάπη since it is not based on any overflowing condition but rather operates out of deficiency. In other words, for human beings, because of our essential lacking condition the only way of possessing the good in a certain way is to produce beautiful -good- things. As a consequence of this, a human being who recognizes himself as subject of desire is obliged to be productive, i.e. generous.

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<sup>138</sup> Vlastos (1973).

<sup>139</sup> See above n. 119.

As for the criticism that Plato's theory of desire reduces the individual to an object as a result of the beloved being a mere means for climbing to the contemplation of Beauty itself<sup>140</sup> and thus being in himself not valued as such but only as an instance of what is really beautiful,<sup>141</sup> this also fails to understand Plato's proposal. First of all, in the dialogue between Socrates and Agathon and in Diotima/Socrates's speech the interest is in describing what erotic desire and especially love for the truth would be like –what it is like to be a subject of desire and particularly a φιλόσοφος. For this reason there is no explicit treatment of the consequences of this proposal for the understanding of interpersonal relationships.<sup>142</sup> However, this simply means that the interest of the argument does not lie in this particular topic and not that the importance of interpersonal relationships is necessarily underestimated. Secondly, some elements seem to indicate actually that self-comprehension as a subject of desire, far from making us treat others as objects, rather makes us understand them as subjects of desire as well. For example, Socrates -the specialist in erotic matters- treats Agathon as a subject of desire for the truth when he tries to help him to accept his lack of knowledge about Eros's nature. Through the fictional dialogue between Socrates and Diotima, a similar example is provided, Socrates now being in the role of subject of desire. Finally, the disindividualization that takes place in the erotic ascent does not mean that other individuals are simply used as 'means' by the subject of desire, so becoming objects for his attainment of Beauty itself. It is, on the contrary, precisely because a distinction can be made between the object of desire -beauty, the good- and individuals, that it is possible to consider individuals not as objects but, in the case of human beings, as other subjects of desire like

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<sup>140</sup> Vlastos (1973).

<sup>141</sup> Nussbaum (1986), pp. 176-184.

<sup>142</sup> Rowe (1998), pp. 7 and 188-189. Gill (1999), p. xxxviii also points out, against Nussbaum's interpretation, that the ascent implies interpersonal love. He follows Price (1981) and (1989), pp. 15-54. On the reciprocity of ἔρως see also Halperin (1986).



ourselves with whom maybe we can co-create in beauty, given that they also desire the real good.

Socrates' behaviour with Alcibiades gives a more complete illustration of the way that Platonic ἔρως works in interpersonal relationships.

#### 4. Alcibiades' speech (212c4-222b7)

The traditional interpretation<sup>143</sup> of this speech as being fundamentally an illustration of Eros-φιλόσοφος through the portrait of Socrates that Alcibiades offers there has been challenged in some works of the end of the twentieth century. Nussbaum<sup>144</sup> suggests reading it as a criticism of the non-human love of the philosopher described in Diotima's speech: Alcibiades' passion for Socrates would represent the normal feeling of intense love for an individual in contrast to the dispassionate attitude of Socrates towards him, as a result of 'being in love' with what is beautiful. In this way, by adding this final speech, Plato may have intended to create a dramatic tension between these two ways of understanding love. Reeve<sup>145</sup> also suggests that the introduction of Alcibiades' speech is critical in the sense that hints that Socrates' method is a failure since he has not succeeded in initiating his favourite disciple into a philosophical way of life.

Similarly to the traditional interpretation, I maintain here that this speech seems to illustrate, on the one hand, through the portrait of Socrates, what the philosopher who has attained contemplation of Beauty itself is like and what kind of

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<sup>143</sup> Bury (1932), pp. lx-lxiv, Robin (1951), pp. ci-cviii, Dover (1980), pp. 164-165, Rowe (1998), pp. 205-206, Waterfield (1994), pp. xxxvii-xi, Gill.(1999), pp. xxxv-xxxix, Brisson (1998), pp. 51-55.

<sup>144</sup> Nussbaum (1986), ch. 6, pp. 165-199 (see esp. pp. 198-199).

<sup>145</sup> Reeve (1992). Socrates would have failed to lead Alcibiades to the attachment to the beauty of his individual soul to the love for beauty in general. This failure of Socrates as a teacher of erotic matters would have led Alcibiades to his disastrous end.

interpersonal relationship he establishes through this understanding with his beloved. On the other hand, the character of Alcibiades exemplifies what a talented personality would be like if he does not develop the 'currents' of his desire in an appropriate way.

#### **4.1. Socrates: Eros-φιλόσοφος and procreator of "true virtue" and beautiful words**

Socrates is presented in Alcibiades' speech, as many interpreters have pointed out,<sup>146</sup> as having the characteristics of the Eros-φιλόσοφος. He shares Eros' Πενία-features by being: "far from beautiful" but, in fact, ugly like the Silenus (203c6-7; cf. 215a7-b1)<sup>147</sup>; "dirty and barefoot, ... always sleeping on the ground, without blankets", as when on the expedition to Potidaea Socrates walked about in the cold of winter without wearing any shoes and being barely covered by his himation (203d1-3; cf. 220b3-5<sup>148</sup>); he is also poor and, in fact, disdainful of material resources (203c7-d3; 204b7; cf. 216d8-e2.). He also has Eros' Πόρος-like characteristic: like him, he is "a schemer after the beautiful and good", insofar as he likes to be around beautiful young men (203d4; cf. 216d2-3, see also 213c4-5); "courageous, impetuous and intense", as when he shows outstanding valour at Potidea and Delium (203d5; see also 219d3ff.); he is also "both passionate for wisdom and resourceful in looking for it, philosophising all his life", since he is able to keep reflecting ceaselessly (203d6-7; cf. 220c and the attribution to Socrates of φρόνησις at 219d6); "a clever magician, sorcerer and sophist", since he charms all kinds of people with his words (203d8; cf. 215b8ff.). He is also a

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<sup>146</sup> See above nn. 119 and 139. Special treatment on the comparison of Eros and Socrates in Osborne (1994), pp. 86-111.

<sup>147</sup> Alcibiades' comparison of Socrates with Marsyas and the Silenus suggests that he is not at least physically beautiful. However, he thinks him beautiful in his soul (216e7-217a2).

<sup>148</sup> See 174a3-5 where Aristodemus says that Socrates' wearing sandals and making himself beautiful is something unusual.

δαίμονιος man (203a5; cf δαίμονίω ὡς ἀληθῶς, 219b7-c1), and his divine words make evident who are in need of the gods and of being initiated (215c5-6).

As this shows, there are many elements in the text which suggest that the character of Socrates has attained contemplation of Beauty itself. At 212a2-5 it is said that if any person should achieve contemplation of Beauty itself, he would be able to produce “true virtue” instead of what is by contrast “images of it”. Through the portrait of Socrates given by Alcibiades, what the “production of true virtue” by a philosopher would be like is also indicated.

Socrates is presented as exercising an amazing σωφροσύνη (216d7; 219d5) and supported by an outstanding courage (ἀνδρεία, 219d5), which enables him to endure hardship (καρτερεῖν) when others fail to do so (220a1):<sup>149</sup> he can drink in large amounts but without ever getting drunk (214a, 220a), feels no attachment to material wealth (219e1-2, 216d8-e1), is able to resist the cold of winter when being deprived of normal shelter in order to keep his feet and body warm (220a6-c1), has surpassed the famous Greek generals Alcibiades and Laches in his valour during the battles of Potidaea and Delium (220d3-221c1) and has shown extraordinary endurance in day-long reflection and investigation (συννοήσας ...σκοπῶν, ζητῶν, φροντίζων, 220c3-7). Moreover, his astounding behaviour does not seek prizes and glory that might be gained from men (220e6-7): the reward of his acts must lie elsewhere. In other words, Socrates does not just happen to be moderate or courageous at times (as Laches or even Alcibiades) but he also *knows* how and when his endurance and moderation have to be employed and what the real reward of this is (the possession of the real good, happiness and, maybe, a god-like immortality). In this sense he is a “procreator of true virtue” and not just of images of it. Above all, he is able to produce “words” (λόγους) superior to any of those produced by the great orators like Pericles (215e4-216a2): words of such a nature that all kinds of people –young boys, mature men, women

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<sup>149</sup> At the end of Diotima’s speech Socrates especially emphasises the courage of Eros (212b8).

or slaves come to feel “possessed” when listening to them (215d1ff.). Indeed they make many of them like Alcibiades (216c) think they are living in an unworthy way (215e7-216c3). In short, since Socrates has knowledge, his words are the only ones which can produce “real virtue”. Thus, someone able to see “inside” Socrates’ words discovers that his discourse is like statues of the gods (τὰ ἐντὸς ἀγάλματα) and full of amazing beauty (216e5-217a2; see also 215a2-3). Furthermore, these words are the only ones that have intelligence and “are to the highest degree divine and contain within them the greatest number of statues of virtue” (θειοτάτους καὶ πλεῖστα ἀγάλματ’ ἀρετῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔχοντας, 222a3-4). Many aspects of his behaviour are not only praiseworthy, as in the case of other men, but also so startling<sup>150</sup> that the ‘singularity’ -ἀτοπία- in what he does and says is one of his most essential characteristics. His ἀτοπία and superhuman actions must have -so Plato will want to suggest to us- their origin in the uncommon experience of having attained the knowledge of Beauty itself.

#### 4.2. Loving and lovable Socrates

As said above, Alcibiades’ report of how Socrates has behaved with him and what kind of effects this has produced within him is the best example of what an “erotic” interpersonal relationship with a philosopher would be like.

In principle, as Alcibiades presupposes, the kind of relationship that he looks forward to establishing with Socrates fits the traditional pattern of the time, as described, for example, in Pausanias’ speech: Socrates looks to be an ἐραστής, i.e. an older man who would willingly offer his wisdom and experience to the not

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<sup>150</sup> There is a reiterated use of θαῦμα and its derivatives in reference to Socrates’ aspects or words in Alcibiades’ speech: 220a4 and 7, 220c6, 221c6, 213d3.

so young but still highly attractive<sup>151</sup> ἐρώμενος Alcibiades in exchange for sexual enjoyment of his beauty<sup>152</sup>.

However, through his conduct Socrates operates a transposition of the traditional roles, in such a way that, as Alcibiades complains, he -i.e. Socrates- becomes the beloved, while his supposedly erotic partners -Alcibiades, but also Charmides, Euthydemus, Agathon (222a1-b8) and his faithful follower and ἐραστής Aristodemus- become the lover. Thus, although Alcibiades still expects to be able to bestow his favours upon Socrates in the conventional way of the beloved, he is the one who pursues and tries to seduce Socrates, so acting as if he were the lover.<sup>153</sup>

However, Socrates is not just playing hard to get with Alcibiades: not only does he refuse his initial advances but, actually, he also declines when Alcibiades finally makes him a straight proposal of sexual intercourse (218c7ff.). Socrates is, in fact, still a lover, for he openly claims to be in love with Alcibiades (213c7-d4). However, his love is of a different kind. His main concern is to lead Alcibiades to the recognition that something is lacking in his life and, then, open up within him the desire not of amorous intercourse with Socrates but of a better life through the practice of philosophy. It is precisely this effect that Socrates' words and company have had upon Alcibiades as well as upon many other people:

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<sup>151</sup> We do not know exactly when the whole incident took place. But Alcibiades might not be an adolescent anymore but a young man, given that, though still being at the bloom of his beauty and youth (217a3), he surely does not behave in his attempt to seduce Socrates like a παιδικά in his puberty.

<sup>152</sup> On the characteristics of the homosexual relationships in Plato's time see: Dover (1980), pp. 3-4 and (1978); also Part Four: "Erotics", Chapters 1 and 2 of Foucault (1985), pp. 185-214 and Brisson (1998), pp. 55-65.

<sup>153</sup> In the *Lysis* Socrates practices his same strategy of leading the beloved to the role of the lover during the dialogue with the two young boys Lysis and Menexenus, in place of the kind of thing that Hippothales has tried to do in order to gain Lysis' love (see *Lys.* 205a9-206c7).

- a) Socrates' words produce an overwhelming commotion in Alcibiades's life (215e1-216a2).
- b) He makes Alcibiades recognize that his way of living is not worthy and that "he is lacking himself", insofar as he does not take care of himself but worries about the Athenians' matters (216a2-7).
- c) He is the only person who engenders a feeling of shame in Alcibiades for his way of life (216a9-b3).
- d) Above all, by not accepting sexual intercourse with Alcibiades, Socrates teaches him that the beauty of wisdom the latter sees in him is superior to his physical beauty, which he is so proud of (216e7-217a1), and thus not exchangeable for it (218e6-a4). Alcibiades -even as he flees from a philosophical way of life (216b5-c3)- has at least learnt his lesson regarding this, as he recognizes Socrates' "inner" beauty as both amazing and superior (see again 216e7-217a1).
- e) He tries to make Alcibiades reflect that, in reality, the beauty which is valuable is not Alcibiades' physical beauty or not even the kind of beauty which Socrates possesses (and which Alcibiades is trying to obtain through an unfair exchange) but a kind of beauty that can only be properly seen with "the eye of the soul" (219a2-4). This seems to suggest that Socrates is trying to lead him to a 'dis-individualization' of beauty such that he might be initiated in erotic matters. By refusing to treat Alcibiades as his unique beloved -as the latter complains (213d2-3, 222d1-2)- he is helping him to 'dis-individualize' his own beauty and thus not to consider himself as an object.
- f) He suggests to Alcibiades that they should "think things out and do whatever appears to the two of us to be best" (219b1-2). Thus, Socrates is interested not only in personally attaining the good but also in helping Alcibiades to do so as well.
- g) In general, Socrates has awakened within him -as within many others- "the madness and Bacchic frenzy of philosophy" (218b2-5) and 'bitten' his heart and soul with love for the truth (217e6-218a7)

In other words, Socrates, far from treating his beloved Alcibiades as merely an instance of beauty in order to climb toward the contemplation of Beauty, wants him rather to discover himself as a subject of desire and, more precisely, as someone who desires the truth and needs to change his life in order to do this.<sup>154</sup>

Unfortunately, Alcibiades, in spite of a correct superficial registering of the peculiar events of his love life with Socrates, nevertheless fails to understand their real meaning and refuses to redirect his strong ἔρως to better goals.

#### 4.3. Ruinous love: Alcibiades

As shown in the analysis of Diotima's speech, 'philosophy' or 'love for the truth' proves to be the most complete way of developing our passion for beauty and, alongside it, our desire for the real good and immortality. Nevertheless, Eros/ἔρως also acts as an 'intermediary' between the mortal and the divine in his lower expressions, such as procreation in beauty in relation to the soul and even to the body. These latter realisations also bring us closer in some way to the good, insofar as we gain through them *a kind of* immortality.

However, it is the case that not only might most of us not develop our love for the truth but, in many cases, our appetites might not be correctly developed either. Similarly, our desire for fame and honour may not always be orientated in such a positive way. Alcibiades provides a good example of an unsuccessful orientation of ἔρως.

As shown above, Alcibiades has deeply felt the effects of Socrates' love and the kind of striking change that his words might bring into his life. However,

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<sup>154</sup> The coincidence of the steps between the erotic ascent and Alcibiades' description of his courtship of Socrates has been pointed out (see Bury (1932), pp. lx-lxiv). This means that Alcibiades also understands the pattern of the erotic behaviour, although he is not able to transpose it into terms of the search for the truth.

Alcibiades refuses to succumb to the charms of philosophy but rather persists in avoiding being convinced by Socrates of his need to transform his existence in a radical way (216a-b).

In contrast to this possibility, he leads a dissipated life governed by an unrestrained indulgence of the appetites. For example, he arrives at Agathon's in such a wild state of intoxication that he needs the help not only of his attendants but also of the flute-girl in order to find his way (212c4-e3). Furthermore, far from refraining himself from drinking to excess, he in fact proposes and insists upon drinking more (213e-214a). Moreover, although he has performed courageous actions on the battlefield, having received a prize for bravery from the generals (220d-e), what caused him to behave in this way was simply his "desire for the honour that comes from ordinary people" (216b). In addition to this, although the guests at Agathon's party do not know, Apollodorus's audience and the readers do know about the more serious consequences incurred by Alcibiades as a result of his misdirected desires. Alcibiades and his friends will be implicated in the crime of the profanation of the Eleusinian Mysteries and in the mutilation of the Herms<sup>155</sup> not long after the celebration of Agathon's victory is supposed to take place. By the time that the introductory conversation occurs, Alcibiades, in his unfortunate expedition to Sicily, has partly provoked Athens' final downfall in the Peloponnesian war.<sup>156</sup>

Finally, although Alcibiades accurately remembers details of Socrates' merits and of his behaviours toward him, he fails to understand the real meaning of Socrates' love for him because of an improper use and development of his strong desires.<sup>157</sup> When Alcibiades reveals the various ways in which he has tried to seduce Socrates (217a ff.), he reveals that he had never been able to give up his belief that

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<sup>155</sup> On this point see Murray (1990).

<sup>156</sup> See Rowe (1998), p. 206.

<sup>157</sup> See Szlezák (1993), pp. 91-93.



Socrates was seeking the enjoyment of a physical encounter with him.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, he missed the chance of initiating himself into a philosophical way of life.

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<sup>158</sup> See Rowe (1998a, pp. 206, 209, 210 and 213 on the diverse ways in which Alcibiades misunderstands Socrates' intentions.

## 5. Further questions

The *Symposium* offers an understanding of human beings as they are constituted by the leading passion of their lives or ἔρως. It also presents philosophy as the most satisfactory way of developing this leading passion so that it takes us, so far as is possible, toward the attainment of wisdom and, in tandem with it, to the real good, happiness and immortality.

However, some suggestions that we find in the text remain incomplete:

a) First of all, although all human beings desire the real good, the leading desire of each life runs in different directions: some people focus their ἔρως upon procreation in beautiful bodies and thus attain immortality by leaving individuals of the same species behind; others feel passionate about attaining immortal fame and honour and posterity as a consequence of the procreation of amazing deeds and cultural productions; few of them have their life led by φιλοσοφία or love for the truth and, if they attain contemplation of Beauty itself, procreate “true virtue” and not “images of it”, as the poets who are not philosophers do, given that they do not possess knowledge.<sup>159</sup> In this way it is philosophers who approach the state closest to that of the divine condition in this life. Furthermore, we have seen that an individual like Alcibiades may have his strong passions completely misdirected, in such a way that his ἔρως does not bring him closer to the good and immortality but, in fact, even finally leads him to self-destruction.

How and why the ‘currents’ of desire are organized in different ways in different individuals is not explained in the *Symposium*. Further developments and elucidations of these points can be found in the *Republic* in the tripartite theory of the soul and in the distinction made between different kinds of individuals -lover

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<sup>159</sup> This would be the case of the different kinds of δημιουργοί mentioned at 208e5ff and also of some of the speakers previous to Socrates like Aristophanes and Agathon.



of wealth, lover of honour or lover of the truth- according to which 'stream' of desire rules their lives.

b) Secondly, the erotic ascent sketches what the education of an individual should be like in order that he may have love for the truth as the leading passion of his life. However, no account of what these steps or Beauty itself more precisely consist in is developed in the *Symposium*. Again these stages can be recognized in the programme for earlier and higher education traced in detail in the *Republic*.

c) Additional information about what "procreation of true virtue" by the philosopher would be like can also be found in the *Republic*: the coincidence of the just man and the wise man makes clear why the philosopher, who has all his sources of motivation appropriately organized, is the only one who can exercise both these virtues and the other two -i.e. bravery and moderation- in a perfect way. The production of true virtue takes place in each individual but also disseminates itself in and has effects on others.

d) Finally, as we have seen above, Plato suggests the possibility of a god-like immortality after death at the end of the erotic ascent (212a5-7). However, no explicit information is given about what this state would be like. The reflections in *Republic* 10 on the immortality of the soul when deprived of its bodily aspects, and on its final destiny within a cosmological order and in the light of the development of its love for the truth during its embodied existence, offer further clarification on this point.

χαλεπαὶ τὰ καλὰ

Pl., *Hi.Ma.* 304e8

## CHAPTER II

**The psychological make-up of the human being according to the leading desire of his/her soul in the *Republic*: development or destruction of our essential rational condition.<sup>160</sup>**

### *Abstract of argument of chapter*

ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτω γε εἰς ἓν τι αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι σφόδρα ῥέπουσιν, ἴσμεν πού  
ὅτι εἰς τὰλλα τούτω ἀσθενέστεραι, ὥσπερ ῥεῦμα ἐκεῖσε  
ἀπωχετευμένον.<sup>161</sup>

*Through the 'hydraulic' image of the soul the human being is described as constituted by two main 'currents' of desire: the 'stream' of reason that runs towards the desire for the truth and the real good and another 'current' towards the bodily pleasures and the changeable. According to which 'current' is the stronger two possibilities are open to us: either to become lovers of the truth as far as possible and, with it, to develop our nature as rational beings and to attain what we all desire, i.e. the real good; or to become lovers of honour and lovers of wealth (and eventually even a tyrant governed by an ἔρως especially protects the unnecessary,*

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<sup>160</sup> I follow Griffith's translation, unless otherwise indicated. The lines of the passages are given according to Burnet's edition of the Greek text

<sup>161</sup> "Besides, we can be sure, I take it, that the stronger a person's desires are in one direction, the weaker they will be in other direction. Like a stream when it gets diverted." (6.485d6-8). At 6.485d10 ff. it is said that these desires can flow in the channel of learning, as happens in the case of the philosopher. So αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι have to be taken at 6.485d6 as 'desires' in general and not only as 'appetites' of the ἐπιθυμητικόν.

lawless appetites) and in this way to weaken or even corrupt our essential rationality.

The 'tripartite' theory of the soul in Book 4 is a description of a human being from the point of view of desires in conflict within him. In this sense there are three 'aspects' (εἶδη) or 'parts' (μέρη) within us: the ἐπιθυμητικόν, the θυμοειδές and the λογιστικόν. Between these three aspects a conflict takes place that can be summarized as follows: there is often a contradiction between a desire represented by and originating in the 'pull' of the appetites and another desire based on the 'pull' of reason according to its calculations; in this conflict the 'spirited' part sometimes supports reason in a fight against the appetites, sometimes not. In this latter case the θυμοειδές either is already weakened by the appetites, so that it defends as honourable only what the appetites aim at and, in this way, though being a natural ally of reason, runs into the 'current' of the appetitive part; or, being strongly developed but not rationally trained, it initially leads the soul, fights for victory and honour but is finally weakened and dragged along by the appetites, which have had the chance to evolve without limit.

The reason why these desires create a conflict is that opposite courses of action can result from them: in other words, the conflict of desires derives from a conflict about what is to be done. However, Plato is not interested in all conflicts of this kind but in **the** decisive conflict for the human being: whether the 'current' of the appetites is to become stronger, so that we lose our chance of being what we truly are -rational beings- and of achieving what we all desire, i.e. the real good; or whether reason's 'stream' of desire towards the truth and the real good is fortified, nourished and helped with the strength of the 'spirited' part, so that we become rational beings as far as possible.

As can be reconstructed especially from what is said in Books 4, 8 and 9, each of the parts has its proper characteristics and object or objects of desire: the appetitive part is φιλοχρήματον and φιλοκερδές, i.e. is primarily related to objects of our

*physiological needs and, derivatively, to wealth as a means of supporting these needs; the 'spirited' part is φιλόνηκον and φιλότιμον, i.e. fights for victory and honour; reason is φιλομαθές and φιλόσοφον, i.e. desires the truth and, with it, the real good. Insofar as through primary education the desires of the three parts of the soul are trained in a certain way and can be either developed and fortified or enfeebled and even inhibited, the earlier education described in Books 2 and 3 has a decisive influence on which of the two main 'streams' of the soul becomes the stronger.*

*Which leading desire governs our life decides the development or deterioration of reason, which constitutes our true nature. If the stream of the appetites is the stronger, reason still makes calculations and judgements but cannot establish what is really good on its own; it has to calculate according to what the aim is for the dominant part: satisfaction of physiological needs, acquisition of wealth if the appetitive part already dominates; or victory and honour, in case of the 'spirited' part's guidance in the soul, a guidance which ends, anyway, in the spirited part's enfeeblement and the the appetites' empowerment within the soul. Besides, "what is base in us" (which includes, according to Book 10, the appetites and their pleasures together with other affections of the soul, such as perception -especially deceptive perceptions- and overdeveloped emotions) puts the soul in contact with the changeable and causes reason to produce distorted judgements based on appearances and degraded versions of reality. In this way reason is debilitated and eventually even corrupted. Conversely, if reason's 'current' towards the truth and the real good leads the soul (a leadership for which not only reason's education in right beliefs and good harmonies but also the appropriate training of the appetites and the 'spirited' part are required), reason can consider things on its own, as far as possible, and try to attain full knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the individual good and the political good based on the Good of reality in general. This is the case of the lover of wisdom who is described at the end of Book 5 and whose higher education in mathematics and dialectic is explained in Books 6 and 7. The lover of wisdom -the φιλό- σοφος- is the person who achieves a maximum*

*development of the desire for the truth and the real good and, with it, of his most essential aspect as a human being. Since knowledge of the Good is also a condition for knowing what is good for the individual and for society and is, in this way, a condition of individual and social justice, alongside the maximum development of his rational condition the lover of the truth also achieves fulfilment and perfection in relation to all his "aspects" or "parts", considered either separately or together as whole.*

*At the end of Book 10 the eschatological myth puts aside our bodily existence, on which the existence of the irrational parts depends. Thus this after-death story allows us a picture of ourselves from the point of view of the love for the truth, i.e. from the point of view of how successful we have been in developing our authentic nature: to be rational beings. This eschatological view is constructed in the light of an understanding of the universe as a cosmic order in which the human being is inserted and participates with his good and evil actions, being punished or rewarded according to them.*

*Section I: The deduction of the parts of the soul from a conflict of desires*

**Introduction**

The soul, i.e. ourselves,<sup>162</sup> consists in a unity that can be analysed into three aspects or kinds,<sup>163</sup> as is clearly expressed through the comparison of the soul with creatures of many forms that have grown together into one such as Chimaera, Scylla or Cerberus:

τῶν τοιούτων τινά... οἷαι μυθολογοῦνται παλαιαὶ γενέσθαι φύσεις,  
ἥ τε Χιμαίρας καὶ ἡ Σκύλλης καὶ Κερβέρου, καὶ ἄλλαι τινὲς  
συχναὶ λέγονται συμπεφυκυῖαι ἰδέαι πολλὰ εἰς ἓν γενέσθαι.<sup>164</sup>

In other words three forms of the soul develop, in some way, together:

σύνναπτε τοίνυν αὐτὰ εἰς ἓν τρία ὄντα, ὥστε πη συμπεφυκέναι  
ἀλλήλοις.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> The soul is identical with us, insofar as on many occasions Plato refers indiscriminately to 'the soul' or 'us' (see Annas (1981), p. 54). The σῶμα would be the external, physical aspect of us.

<sup>163</sup> The 'parts' of the soul, into which Plato analyses the soul, have been often understood as 'faculties', 'powers' or 'principles' (in relation to this there is a good summary in Moline (1978), pp. 1-2, n. 2). Plato's use of εἶδος (and γένος) as well as μέρος to refer to the parts of the soul seems to suggest appropriate to say that there is a distinction into different 'aspects' or 'kinds' (see LSJ, s.v. εἶδος, γένος, μέρος).

<sup>164</sup> "One of these creatures the ancient stories tell us used to exist. The Chimera, or Scylla, or Cerberus, or any of the other creatures which are said to be formed by a number of species growing into one." (9.588c2-5).

<sup>165</sup> "Now join the three of them into one, so that they've grown into one another in some way." (9.588d7-8).



so constituting a single creature: the human being (9.588e1).

Each of these three aspects of our soul has a proper desire: the desire for wealth and profit in the case of the appetitive part; the desire for victory and honour in the case of the 'spirited' part and the desire for wisdom and learning in the case of the rational part.

This analysis of the soul into three kinds or forms from the point a view of desire already appears in Book 4, in which the three parts are differentiated according to the conflicting directions of their proper desires. From 4.436b1-4.439e3 two parts are distinguished according to what is for Plato *the* fundamental conflict within the human being: the ἐπιθυμητικόν as the aspect of us related to appetites such as hunger, thirst, etc. and directed to the bodily and changeable independently of their goodness or badness; the desires of the λογιστικόν which, being the result of what reason considers, through calculation, as the right thing to do, are often at odds with the appetites. In this way reason is not something different from desire that merely provides us with information for our actions: it is actually an aspect of us with its own desires and impulses.<sup>166</sup> Then, from 4.439e4 to 4.441c3, a third part of the soul is distinguished: the θυμοειδές. This part of the soul is 'bivalent' in the sense that can take part in the fundamental conflict of the soul on one side or the other, that is, its aggressiveness and desire for victory can be used either to fight against the appetites forming alliance with reason, or to go for victory and honour against reason's advice, and so be finally weakened by and dragged by the 'stream' of appetites in their direction.

Which 'stream' of desires predominates at a certain moment determines what course of action is to be done at that time. However, the purpose of the analysis of the parts of the soul in Book 4 as it concerns desire is not only to offer a theory of

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<sup>166</sup> Similarly Cooper (1999) and Kahn (1987). Lovibond also says that the soul is "an organ of desire or striving" (Lovibond (1991), p. 36).

action but also to pave the way to showing the two possibilities open to us as human beings: either to have a life led by the desire for the the truth and the real good of the rational part with the help of our ‘spirited’ aspect and so to fulfil our essential rational condition as far as possible; or to live a life under the rule of desire for honour or the government of the appetites and so weaken or destroy reason together with its highest desires.

### **1.1. The deduction of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the λογιστικόν from a conflict between the opposite direction of their desires<sup>167</sup>**

The distinction between the appetitive part and the rational part at 4.436a8-4.439e3 is based on the description of a conflict within the soul between opposite desires. Insofar as the argument is quite long, I have subdivided it into the following steps to allow a clearer understanding:

- a. 4.436b5-4.437a10: Assertion of the principle of opposition. Examples.
- b. 4.437b1-4.437d5: Application of the principle of opposition to the case of the soul. Differentiation of opposite desiderative tendencies: positive desiderative expressions in the case of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and negative desiderative expressions, which restrict and in this sense are opposite to the appetites, in the case of the λογιστικόν.
- c. 4.437d6-4.437e8: Description of the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν as desires just for their objects “in themselves” -thirst for drink, hunger for food- without specific characteristics (such as heat, magnitude, etc).
- d. 4.438b1-4.439e3: Further analysis of the desire and objects of desire of the ἐπιθυμητικόν in order mainly to exclude *goodness* as a possible specific characteristic of its objects of desire. The desires and objects of desires of the

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<sup>167</sup> Plato’s argument here may or may not withstand a strict evaluation of its logic (see for example R. Robinson’s criticism of the ‘argument of the opposites’ at 4.436b-4.437a (Robinson R. (1971), answered by Stalley (1975)). I just try to concentrate on the implications for the psychological theory that is in play in the *Republic*.

ἐπιθυμητικόν are considered in their essence as cases of the relative terms. The specific properties that these appetites can have are explained through the presence or absence of these properties in the subject of desire but not as part of the appetite itself. *Goodness* being one of these specific characteristics, it is left out as a specific aspect of any appetite. The consequence of that is that the ἐπιθυμητικόν is blind to what is good and bad, and that the recognition of and desire for the real good comes to belong exclusively to the λογιστικόν. In this way, the basic conflict within the soul in question here is between the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν that looks for its objects *independently of whether they are good or not*, and the desires of the λογιστικόν, which, insofar as it recognizes what is good and bad, can be opposite to those of the ἐπιθυμητικόν.

a. The different parts of the soul are established in Books 4 of the *Republic* through the application of the so-called 'principle of opposition':

δῆλον ὅτι ταῦτόν τ'ἀναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταῦτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταῦτόν οὐκ ἐθελήσει ἅμα, ὥστε ἂν που εὕρισκωμεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ταῦτα γιγνόμενα, εἰσόμεθα ὅτι οὐ ταῦτόν ἦν ἀλλὰ πλείω.<sup>168</sup>

Some illustrative examples are given in order to clarify how different parts can be recognized in a unity through the principle of opposition.<sup>169</sup> After the analysis of

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<sup>168</sup> "It is obvious that nothing can do two opposite things, or be in two opposite states, in the same part of itself, at the same time, in relation to the same object. So if this what we find happening in these examples we shall know there was not just one element involved, but more than one." 4.436b8-c1. See also 4.436e8-4.437a2.

<sup>169</sup> If a man stands and at the same time moves his hands and head, he can be simultaneously in motion in relation to his hands and head and at rest in relation to the rest of his body (4.436c8-d1). This means that, although the man is a unity, it is possible to recognize in him two different kinetic states. Similarly a top stands still and at the same time is in motion when with the peg fixed in one point it turns round (4.436d4-7) and so here too it is possible to recognize, in the top taken as a whole, two different states in relation to its movement. Finally, in relation to any circular motion it

these examples the principle of opposition is considered a plausible way of recognizing different aspects in a unity and taken as a hypothesis that can be used for further investigation (4.437a4-9).

b. In a similar way to the previous examples, opposite desiderative movements can be distinguished in the unity of the soul, namely the desiderative expressions of the appetites on the one hand and restrictions to these appetites, which are opposite desiderative expressions to these appetites, on the other hand.

The soul can have activities or states at odds, as for example to assent and to dissent; to strive after a thing and to reject it; to embrace and to repel:

- ἄρ' <ἄν> οὖν [...] τὸ ἐπινεύειν τῷ ἀνανεύειν καὶ τὸ ἐφίεσθαι τινος λαβεῖν τῷ ἀπαρνεῖσθαι καὶ τὸ προσάγεσθαι τῷ ἀπωθεῖσθαι, πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ἐναντίων ἀλλήλοις θείης εἴτε ποιημάτων εἴτε παθημάτων; οὐδὲν γὰρ ταύτη διοίσει.

- ἀλλ' [...] τῶν ἐναντίων.<sup>170</sup>

What must be underlined is that the examples of actions and passions of the soul that are given here consist of opposite *desiderative* tendencies of the soul. These desiderative drives can be positive urges, where the soul strives towards the attainment of what it wishes or negative drives, where the soul rejects and repulses something.

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can be said that the same things in respect of a straight line are at rest, because the things don't incline to either side on the line, but in respect of the circumference move in circle (436d8-e6). In this case again we have a unity –any thing that moves in a circle- and two different kinetic states.

<sup>170</sup> “-Very well. Now think about things like saying ‘yes’ and saying ‘no’, desire and rejection, or attraction and repulsion. Wouldn't you classify all those as pairs of opposites? Whether they are activities or states will be irrelevant to our purposes. –Yes, as opposites.” (4.437b1-6).

In this section of Book 4 of the *Republic* all appetites like thirst, hunger, etc, i.e. desires which are related to our appetitive aspect, are referred to the positive drives of the soul.

- τί οὖν; ἦν δ' ἐγώ· διψῆν καὶ πεινῆν καὶ ὅλως τὰς ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ αὖ τὸ ἐθέλειν καὶ τὸ βούλεσθαι, οὐ πάντα ταῦτα εἰς ἐκεῖνά ποι' ἂν θείης τὰ εἶδη τὰ νυνδὴ λεχθέντα; οἷον ἀεὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐπιθυμοῦντος ψυχὴν οὐχὶ ἥτοι ἐφίεσθαι φήσεις ἐκείνου οὐ ἂν ἐπιθυμῇ, ἢ προσάγεσθαι τοῦτο ὃ ἂν βούληταί οἱ γενέσθαι, ἢ αὖ, καθ' ὅσον ἐθέλει τί οἱ πορισθῆναι, ἐπινεύειν τοῦτο πρὸς αὐτὴν ὥσπερ τινὸς ἐρωτῶντος, ἐπορευομένην αὐτοῦ τῆς γενέσεως;<sup>171</sup>

At the same time there are opposite expressions of desire in the soul which are negative and opposite to the appetites:

τί δέ; τὸ ἀβουλεῖν καὶ μὴ ἐθέλειν μὴδ' ἐπιθυμεῖν οὐκ εἰς τὸ ἀπωθεῖν καὶ ἀπελάνειν ἀπ' αὐτῆς καὶ εἰς ἅπαντα τὰναντία ἐκείνοις θήσομεν;<sup>172</sup>

So what has been established through steps a) and b) of the argument is that, according to the principle of opposition, there are conflicts in the soul between desires with opposite directions, the positive desires being identified with

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<sup>171</sup> “-What about hunger and thirst –I said- and desires in general? Or wanting and being willing? Wouldn't you find all those a place among categories we just mentioned? Won't you say, for example, that the soul of the person who desires something either reaches out for what it desires, or draws what it wants towards itself? Or to the extent that it is willing to have something provided for it, that it mentally says 'yes' to it, as if in reply to a question, as it stretches out towards the realisation of its desire?” (4.437b7-c6).

<sup>172</sup> “What about not wanting, being unwilling, and not desiring? Won't we classify them with rejection and refusal, with all the corresponding opposites, in fact?” (4.437c8-10).

appetites, i.e. desires that concern the ἐπιθυμητικόν. The important point here is that later (4.439b) desires opposed to the appetites are attributed to the λογιστικόν. In this way the basic conflict in the soul comes to be between the *desires* of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the *desires* of the λογιστικόν, and not just between reason and desire.

c. At 4.437d8-e8 the unqualified character of the desire and of the objects of desire of the ἐπιθυμητικόν is established.

The positive desires which are taken as examples of the appetites that belong to the ἐπιθυμητικόν -thirst, hunger- are desires that look for their objects without qualification, i.e. thirst is just desire for drink and similarly hunger just for food:

αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ διψῆν οὐ μὴ ποτε ἄλλου γένηται ἐπιθυμία ἢ οὐπερ πέφυκεν, αὐτοῦ πώματος, καὶ αὖ τὸ πεινῆν βρώματος; - οὕτως, ἔφη, αὐτὴ γε ἡ ἐπιθυμία ἐκάστη αὐτοῦ μόνον ἐκάστου οὐ πέφυκεν, τοῦ δὲ τοίου ἢ τοίου τὰ προσγιγνώμενα.<sup>173</sup>

The fact of being thirsty for 'hot' or 'cold' drink, for 'much' or 'little' drink is related to other circumstances, mostly the presence or not in the soul of heat, plenty, etc, but not to the essence of the desire -thirst- and its object (4.437d8-e8).

The unqualified character of the desires and objects of desire of the ἐπιθυμητικόν -thirst, hunger, etc- is the crucial point that is established here, insofar as it paves the way to avoiding an important objection: the possibility that

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<sup>173</sup> “-But thirst itself cannot possibly be a desire for anything other than its natural object, which is purely and simply drink -any more than hunger can be a desire for anything other than food. -That’s right -he said- Each and every desire, in itself, is a desire only for the thing which is its natural object. The additional element in each case is what makes a desire for this or that particular *kind* of object.” (4.437e4-8). (Griffith’s italics.)

the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν can be instances of a universal appetite for good things and so look for *good* drink, *good* food and so on:

μήτοι τις [...] ἀσκέπτους ἡμᾶς ὄντας θορυβήσῃ, ὥς οὐδεὶς ποτοῦ ἐπιθυμεῖ ἀλλὰ χρηστοῦ ποτοῦ, καὶ οὐ σίτου ἀλλὰ χρηστοῦ σίτου. πάντες γὰρ ἄρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν· εἰ οὖν ἡ διψα ἐπιθυμία ἐστί, χρηστοῦ ἂν εἴη εἴτε πώματος εἴτε ἄλλου ὅτου ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμία, καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι οὕτω.<sup>174</sup>

So what has been concluded up to this point -from a) to c)- is that the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, which ‘pull’ in the opposite direction to the desires of the λογιστικόν, have unqualified objects of desire and, in consequence, objects that can be either good or bad.

d. In the last part of the argument from 4.438b1 to 4.439e3 the fact that the appetites and objects of desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν are without qualification receives further development in order to determine, as we anticipated above, the sense in which the ἐπιθυμητικόν never desires the good. A fundamental consequence that is derived from this is the blindness of the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν in relation to what is good or bad, the recognition and desire for what is truly good apparently belonging only to the λογιστικόν.

First of all a more general principle about relative terms is established:

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<sup>174</sup> “We don’t want to be interrupted by objections we haven’t considered. [...] So here’s one. No one desires drink, but rather *good* drink. None desires food, but rather *good* food, since everyone desires good things. So if thirst is a desire, it must be a desire for something *good*. Either a drink or whatever else it is a desire for. The same goes for other desires.” (4.438a1-5).

ἀλλὰ μέντοι [...] ὅσα γ' ἐστὶ τοιαῦτα οἷα εἶναι τοῦ, τὰ μὲν ποιά  
 ἄττα ποιοῦ τινός ἐστιν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, τὰ δ' αὐτὰ ἕκαστα αὐτοῦ  
 ἑκάστου μόνον.<sup>175</sup>

Some examples are given in order to explain how relative terms can be either for something without qualification or for something with qualification.<sup>176</sup> After this point has been clarified the argument returns at 4.439a1 to a desire of the ἐπιθυμητικόν: thirst. In this case it is also possible to make the distinction between the case of a particular thirst for a particular kind of drink and thirst itself, which is always just for drink itself and looks for its object independently of whether it is great or small, *good* or *bad*:

οὐκοῦν ποιοῦ μὲν τινος πώματος ποίον τι καὶ δίψος, δίψος δ' οὖν  
 αὐτὸ οὔτε πολλοῦ οὔτε ὀλίγου, οὔτε ἀγαθοῦ οὔτε κακοῦ, οὐδ' ἐνὶ  
 λόγῳ ποιοῦ τινος, ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ πώματος μόνον αὐτὸ δίψος πέφυκεν;  
 [...] τοῦ διψῶντος ἄρα ἡ ψυχὴ, καθ' ὅσον διψῇ, οὐκ ἄλλο τι  
 βούλεται ἢ πιεῖν, καὶ τούτου ὀρέγεται καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὁρμαί.<sup>177</sup>

Only after this point in relation to the independence of the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν from specific qualities including goodness has been established, does the argument go back to an instance of opposite desires in the soul of the kind that were described at 4.437b ff. (see b. above), namely the case when there

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<sup>175</sup> "Yes, [...] but if you take all things which are such as to be related to something else, I think that qualified instances are related to qualified objects, whereas the things themselves are each of them related only to an object which is just itself." (4.438a7-b2).

<sup>176</sup> See 4.438b4-d10.

<sup>177</sup> "So for any particular kind of drink, isn't there also a particular kind of thirst? Whereas thirst as such is not thirst for a large drink or a small drink, *nor for a good drink or a bad drink* –nor, to put it briefly, for any specific drink at all. No, the object of thirst as such is, in the nature of things, simply drink as such, isn't it? ... Then, all the thirsty person's soul wants, in so far as he is thirsty, is to drink. That's what it reaches out for, and makes for." (4.439a4-b1).



is something that holds back the part of us that is thirsty. Here, according to the principle of opposition, it is possible to distinguish between a beast-like impulse without qualification that bids the man to drink and another simultaneous desiderative movement towards not drinking.<sup>178</sup>

Like the hands of the archer which simultaneously push and pull the bow, two *desires* pull in the soul in two different directions when a man, although he is thirsty (i.e. desires to drink), does not want to drink (οὐκ ἐθέλειν πίνειν, 4.439c2-3).

e) The conclusion of the argument is, then, that two parts can be differentiated according to these two opposites desires: on the one hand, an appetitive aspect of us, which is incapable of calculation -ἐπιθυμητικόν and ἀλογιστόν-, which draws and drags us διὰ παθημάτων τε καὶ νοσημάτων (4.439d1-2) and ὧ ἐρᾷ τε καὶ πεινῇ καὶ καὶ διψῇ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας [...], πληρώσεών τινων ἡδονῶν ἐταῖρον (4.439d6-8); on the other hand, a rational part of our soul (the λογιστικόν), which “masters and inhibits” (κρατοῦν καὶ κωλοῦν) impulses that come from the appetitive part through the calculation of reason (τὸ μὲν κωλοῦν τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγγίγνεται, ὅταν ἐγγένηται, ἐκ λογισμοῦ, 4.439c9-d1).

What matters is the reason for the conflict in the soul that is in play here, i.e. why these desires pull the soul in opposite directions or, in other words, what these two opposite directions consist in. We can suppose that, insofar as it has been

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<sup>178</sup> οὐκοῦν εἴ ποτέ τι αὐτὴν ἀνθέλκει διψῶσαν, ἕτερον ἂν τι ἐν αὐτῇ εἴη αὐτοῦ τοῦ διψῶντος καὶ ἄγοντος ὥσπερ θηρίον ἐπὶ τὸ πίνειν; (“And if there is anything at all holding it back when it is thirsty, would this have to be a different element in it from the actual part which is thirsty, and which drives it like an animal to drink?”) (4.439b 3-5). See also 4.439c5-7: ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῶν τὸ κελεῖν, ἐνεῖναι δὲ τὸ κωλοῦν πίνειν “[Can’t we say] there is something in their soul telling them to drink, and also stopping them [to drink]?” .

emphasised that the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν desire their objects without qualification and specifically without the qualification of their goodness or badness, the λογιστικόν has to be the aspect of us which is able to recognize and desire what is good and advise and desire not to do<sup>179</sup> what the ἐπιθυμητικόν wishes to do. This capacity of the λογιστικόν to recognize the good, which is implicitly suggested here, is clearly asserted a bit later at 4.442c5-8,<sup>180</sup> while its desire for the real good in relation to this capacity is widely treated at 6.504e4 on (see especially 6.505d11-506a7). Nevertheless, the rational part's understanding of the good coincides with its object of desire -the real good and the truth- only when reason can consider things on its own. When rationality is subdued and so corrupted by appetites, anger and, more general, what is evil in us (like over-developed emotions, deceptive sense-perceptions, etc.), it still declares on what is good. But it inevitably does this in a wrong way (in spite of still desiring the real good and the truth), insofar as reason, being overwhelmed by desires alien to it, establishes what is good according to these desires and is at the

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<sup>179</sup> Here only negative desiderative expressions are attributed to the λογιστικόν (or later to the θυμοειδές when it is associated with reason (see 4.440c ff.: οὐκ ἐθέλει πρὸς τοῦτον αὐτοῦ ἐγείρεσθαι ὁ θυμός)) probably for the following reason: the desire for the good derives from our rational aspect so that, when being considered in relation with the irrational tendencies, it appears essentially as imposing a limit on the unlimited tendencies of the appetites. So at this level the λογιστικόν can only reveal negative expressions and is restrictive. However, the rational and 'spirited' desires can be positive as well: for example, the positive desire for learning the truth or the positive desire to face the enemy in a battle. It is also possible (and in fact quite frequent) that appetites can constrain a man contrary to his reason and rule him (4.440a) and in this sense be negative desires.

<sup>180</sup> σοφὸν δὲ γε ἐκείνῳ τῷ μικρῷ μέρει, τῷ δ' ἡρχέν τ' ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ταῦτα παρήγγελλεν, ἔχον αὖ κάκεινο ἐπιστήμην ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ συμφέροντος ἐκάστω τε καὶ ὅλῳ τῷ κοινῷ σφῶν αὐτῶν τριῶν ὄντων. ("But wise by that small part that ruled in him and handed down commands, by its possession in turn within it of the knowledge of what is beneficial for each and for the whole, the community composed of the three.") I follow here Shorey's translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith's translation.

same time misled in its judgements by the influence of the changeable and the bodily.<sup>181</sup>

So we can summarize what has been got from the text about the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the λογιστικόν in this way. A conflict takes place in the soul whenever the desires of our appetitive aspect go in the opposite direction from desires for not doing what the ἐπιθυμητικόν wants to do. The appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν look for their objects as such without further specification: hunger looks for food as such and thirst for drink as such without stipulating what kind of food or drink is required. A fundamental consequence of this is that the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν do not look specifically for *good* objects and so are characterized as blind to what is good and bad, which only reason can discriminate. In this way the ἐπιθυμητικόν can desire objects that are established as not desirable by reason, insofar as the λογιστικόν can desire and want and advise to do the opposite of what the ἐπιθυμητικόν wants. Thus the fundamental conflict that takes place in the soul is not to be described as a battle just between reason and desire but more precisely as between two main tendencies of our desires: the drive of the rational desires towards what reason considers the good and the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, which seek their objects independently of their goodness.<sup>182</sup> This battle of desires with opposite directions within the soul is decisive for each human being, insofar as its result determines not only what is to be done at a particular moment but, in particular, which desires will lead our life and so whether we develop our essential rational condition of being lovers of the truth or not and get close to what we all desire: the real good.

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<sup>181</sup> On this point see below **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement**, pp. 180 ff..

<sup>182</sup> This incapacity for the discrimination of what is good and bad by the appetitive part has as one of its fundamental consequences that this aspect of us cannot establish a limit by itself but needs the rational part with its desire for the good if it is to acquire the appropriate limit (9.586e4-9.587a1).

## 1.2. The deduction of the θυμοειδές from a conflict of its desire for victory either against reason or on the side of reason against the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν

As for the θυμοειδές, this is deduced from a conflict of its proper desires with the desires of one of the two other parts. For this ‘form’ of our soul, which has as its distinctive object of desire victory, fame, honour, two possibilities are open. Either it can look for its proper objects only when reason approves them as appropriate (i.e. the ‘spirited’ part has been trained to fight only when it is right to do it so). In this way it contributes to the drive of the λογιστικόν and is in conflict with the ἐπιθυμητικόν. Or, if it lacks appropriate training, it can reject reason’s counsel about what is good and go for its objects wrongly and blindly. In this way the θυμοειδές comes to be in conflict with reason (see 9.586c7-d2) and can even easily lose its proper goals and move into the course of the ἐπιθυμητικόν. The examples that are given from 4.439e to 4.440d, in order to establish the θυμοειδές as a third and different part of the soul, illustrate these possible directions of the θυμοειδές.

The θυμοειδές is a natural ally of reason in the sense that, when appropriately trained and developed, it is always against the appetites when reason is opposed to them:

ταῖς δ’ ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτὸν κοινωνήσαντα, αἰροῦντος λόγου μὴ δεῖν ἀντιπράττειν, οἶμαί σε οὐκ ἂν φάναι γενομένου ποτὲ ἐν σαντῶ τοῦ τοιούτου αἰσθῆσθαι, οἶμαι δ’ οὐδ’ ἐν ἄλλῳ.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>“Spirit siding with the desires, on the other hand, when reason has declared its opposition, is not the kind of thing I imagine you’d ever claim to have seen, either in yourself or in anybody else.” (4.440b4-7).

This alliance of the θυμοειδές with the λογιστικόν (which is given as a proof that the θυμοειδές is a different part from the ἐπιθυμητικόν) can take different forms and with different results. This can be seen from the illustrative cases that are offered.

The first example is Leontius' conflict between his appetite for the sight of dead bodies (ιδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῖ, 4.439e9) for which he felt a morbid attraction<sup>184</sup> and his rejection, indignation, aversion (ἅμα δὲ αὐτὸ δυσχεραῖνοι καὶ ἀποτρέποι ἑαυτόν, 4.439e9-10), i.e. his desire not to do so. In this case the θυμοειδές is associated with reason's desire for the good -the desire not to see the dead bodies- in conflict with an irrational desire -the desire for seeing dead bodies. However, although anger fights in alliance with reason -i.e. according to what the rational part considers as the right thing to do- in order to defeat the appetites, finally Leontius' appetitive inclinations succeed and he goes to see the corpses (4.440a1-3). The θυμοειδές expresses its aggressiveness and desire for victory in the fight and desire for victory over the appetite to see the dead bodies, i.e. it fights and looks for success but in a way that is considered appropriate by reason:

...καὶ τέως μὲν μάχοιτό τε καὶ παρακαλύπτοιτο...<sup>185</sup>

What this example illustrates is that our θυμός can fight against the appetites (in this case unsuccessfully)

...ὁ λόγος σημαίνει τὴν ὀργὴν πολεμεῖν ἐνίοτε ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ὡς ἄλλο ὄν ἄλλω.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Leontius' morbid attraction for dead bodies is perhaps related to his erotic inclination for very pale young boys (see Adam (1965) I, p. 255).

<sup>185</sup> "For a time he struggled, and covered his eyes." (4.439e10-440a1).

This association of the θυμοειδές with the λογιστικόν can also be successful. For example, take the case at 4.440c1-5 of a man who has acted unjustly (ἀδικεῖν) and for whom it is therefore fair to suffer hunger and cold (which we must suppose has to be very unpleasant for his appetitive aspect insofar as its desires look for satisfaction independently of their goodness or otherwise, and in this case their satisfaction is denied). The nobler this man is, the less angry he becomes because of his sufferings and his anger does not want (οὐκ ἐθέλει) to rise against what he is suffering justly:

...οὐκ ἐθέλει πρὸς τοῦτον αὐτοῦ ἐγείρεσθαι ὁ θυμός...<sup>187</sup>

In this case the θυμοειδές does not want its object –to resist and get rid of sufferings and win. In other words it gives up its desire for victory in this case according to what reason establishes as good and desirable, namely to suffer because of acting unjustly. This presupposes that the ‘spirited’ part has been correctly trained, so that it does not ‘fight’ on every occasion but only when it is appropriate to do it.

For a similar reason, in the case where the same just man has been treated unjustly (ἀδικεῖσθαί), his θυμοειδές under the same conditions of suffering boils with rage and grows fierce against injustice and in favour of what is just:

τί δὲ ὅταν ἀδικεῖσθαί τις ἡγήται; οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ ζεῖ τε καὶ χαλεπαίνει καὶ συμμαχεῖ τῷ δοκοῦντι δικάϊῳ καί, διὰ τὸ πεινῆν καὶ διὰ τὸ ῥιγοῦν καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα πάσχειν, ὑπομένων καὶ

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<sup>186</sup> “...it shows that anger can sometimes be at war with the desires, which implies that they are two distinct separate things.” (4.440a5-6).

<sup>187</sup> “...his spirit ...refuses to raise any objection...” (4.440c5).

νικᾷ καὶ οὐ λήγει τῶν γενναίων, πρὶν ἂν ἡ διαπράξηται ἡ τελευτήσῃ ἢ ὥσπερ κύων ὑπὸ νομέως ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτῷ ἀνακληθεὶς πραῦνθῃ;<sup>188</sup>

This means that the θυμοειδές' desire for fighting for victory, being appropriately trained, now addresses itself to defending what is good and just according to reason and is only calmed when reason indicates that it should be.<sup>189</sup>

However, in spite of being a natural ally of reason in its fight against the appetites, the θυμοειδές can be overdeveloped -and at the same time reason may not be sufficiently developed and the appetites not trained to keep within appropriate limits- and so drive for its goals -victory and honour- without reason's guidance (9.590a9-b1), being in conflict with reason. In this case, without the aggressiveness of the 'spirited' part fighting against them according to reason's commands, the appetites can easily grow without limit. The consequence of this is that the 'spirited' part itself is finally weakened and so dragged in the direction of the appetites' stream (9.590b6-9).

How the desires of completely unreasoning anger (τὸ ἀλογίστως θυμουμένον, 4.441c2) can be in conflict with the desires that arise from the calculation of reason about what is good and bad (so being different from the λογιστικόν) is exemplified with one line of the *Odyssey*: στῆθος δὲ πλήξας κραδίην

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<sup>188</sup> "And about someone who thinks he is being wronged? While this is going on, doesn't he boil with rage at hunger, cold and any hardships of this kind? Doesn't he ally himself with what he thinks is just, and endure all these things until he wins through, refusing to give up his justified indignation until he either achieves him, or dies, or is called back and pacified by reason within him, like a dog being recalled by a shepherd?" (4.440c7-d3).

<sup>189</sup> The fact that the θυμοειδές can become moral indignation does not mean that it becomes identical to reason. See especially 4.442b5-9. It still goes for victory and honour but, when it is led by reason, it does so, for example, over the pull of the appetites.

ἤνιπαπε μύθῳ.<sup>190</sup> This line refers to Odysseus' desires for immediate revenge on his maidservants and the suitors and, at the same time, his comprehension that it is better to wait for the appropriate time to do it. This means that the θυμοειδές of Odysseus without the advice of reason -that is, without its being trained to fight only when it is appropriate to do it- would seek victory over the suitors right now, but this is not the best thing even to attain the θυμοειδές' aim. We can suppose that, if the θυμοειδές will accept the guidance of the λογιστικόν, it would also go for revenge and victory over the suitors (i.e. its object of desire, which in this case seems to be approved by reason), but when it is appropriate -good- to do it according to the calculations of reason.

So in Book 4 the θυμοειδές is treated as a third form of the soul, one with which we feel anger (θυμούμεθα, 4.436a) and fight for victory and which can take the side of reason's desire for the truth and good or blindly go for its own goals, being finally weakened and pulled in the direction of the appetites (in spite of being a natural ally of reason against them). This means that our self-assertive and aggressive tendency<sup>191</sup> can look for its proper objects -victory, honour, fame- in two possible ways. One possibility is that the 'spirited' part 'fights' or does not fight according to what reason establishes as good or not. In this case sometimes its aggressiveness is used to fight external enemies -as in the example of Odysseus with the suitors- but only when it is the right moment to do it; or to fight against 'internal' enemies -the appetites -as in the case of Leontius or of the just man that suffers unjustly. On other occasions, the 'spirited' part also, being an ally of reason, gives up its aggressiveness if this is the right thing to do, as in the case of the noble man who suffers because he has behaved unjustly and so bears his sufferings and is not angry because of that. Another possibility is that the 'spirited'

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<sup>190</sup> "He smote his chest, and thus rebuked his heart." (4.441b6).

<sup>191</sup> It is 'aggressiveness' in the sense that is readiness to confront something or someone (see below **Chapter 2, Section II, 2.1. Aggressiveness and assertiveness as characteristics of the 'spirited' part**, pp. 148 ff.).



part (not being appropriately trained) refuses the guidance of reason and so the θυμοειδές goes inappropriately for its own goals (9.590a9-b1), as would be the case in the example of Odysseus if he had taken revenge over the suitors without waiting for the appropriate moment to do it. When the 'spirited' part cannot follow reason's advice and blindly tries to achieve its goals it is easily corrupted by the irrational beast-like desires in us (9.590b6-9) in the sense that its zeal and rage is finally weakened in the pursuit of the appetites' ends (physiological needs, wealth).

In this way the θυμοειδές seems to have such a condition that, when it is appropriately developed and trained, participates with its proper ardour (θυμός) and desire for victory on the side of reason's fight against the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν. But when the 'spirited' part is overdeveloped and not commanded by reason, finally weakens and is dragged in the direction of the appetites that have grown without limits. This bivalency in its direction itself distinguishes the θυμοειδές from the other two parts, insofar as they have a unique general inherent tendency: the ἐπιθυμητικόν always looks for its proper objects in a beast-like way independently of their goodness or badness and the λογιστικόν always goes for goodness and truth according to its calculations. The θυμοειδές is different from the other two parts because, while it looks for its proper objects -victory, honour, fame- it can either fight against the appetites on the side of the rational desires or go for its goals without reason's orientation.

In this way the existence of the θυμοειδές is inferred from a conflict of desires in the sense that the pursuit of its proper objects of desire can lead the 'spirited' part in opposite directions: either in the tendency of the desires of reason, fighting on its side, or in the 'stream' of the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, after having *irrationally* gone for victory and being at last weakened because of the overgrowth of uncontrolled appetites. So it becomes a decisive factor in the final configuration of the soul in the sense that its ambition for victory can strengthen the

performance of an individual for the attainment of the good that is established by reason (and so drain its powerful stream into reason's channel) or carry out the most savage actions and even lose its own desire for victory and honour when it refuses the guidance of the λογιστικόν.

## ***Section II: Characteristics and proper desires of each part***

### **Introduction**

In the previous section I have tried to show how the three parts of the soul in Book 4 are distinguished according to how they take part in the fundamental conflict of the soul; the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν drive the soul towards the changeable and the bodily, while the rational desires of the λογιστικόν drive it in the opposite direction, towards the truth and the real good, and for its part the θυμοειδές with its desire for victory and aggressiveness ‘runs’ in one direction or the other. From this account an understanding of the human being in terms of leading desires or passions that can dominate his soul starts to emerge. Book 9 concludes the account with the distinction of three basic types of human beings: lovers of wealth, lovers of honour and lovers of the truth or philosophers.

Now, in the present section, I intend to carry out a more analytical description of each of these three aspects and of the desires that constitute them according to what is said especially in Books 4, 7, 8 and 9.<sup>192</sup> I also suggest the way in which education influences the development or inhibition of their proper desires.

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<sup>192</sup> I have often used what is said about the city in Books 4, 8 and 9 for a better understanding of the individual’s soul. The text itself, regardless of the logic of the proposal to compare the city and the individual, invites us to do this: a) The study of the quality of justice in the state in order to examine it in the individual is established as the principle of research (2.368e2-369a3). b) The individual and the city have been shown to have the same parts and in equal number and so similar affections and dispositions can be found in both cases (4.441c4-7; see also 4.435b; 4.435e). c) In addition the description of the forms in the city on many occasions gives psychological information about the individuals that compose the groups and not just sociological information about how the groups work as such. I think that the difference between the sociological and the individual descriptions in the *Republic* is rather that in the first case we have the description of societies ruled either by love for wisdom, love for honour or love for wealth (with its three variations, i.e. oligarchy, democracy and tyranny), where the leading desire is based on the individual or group of

Afterwards, basing myself on this analysis of the parts of the soul, I hope to show in *Section III* how the earlier education of the guardians described in Books 3 and 4 and the higher education described in Books 6 and 7 are meant to develop the proper desires of the three parts appropriately, so that the desire for the truth and the real good of the rational part leads the soul, and an unfolding of our rational condition and the satisfaction of our universal desire for the good are achieved as far as possible. A picture of us according to our success or failure in developing our essential rationality and love for the truth is traced in the eschatological myth of Book 10. This is examined in *Section IV*.

## 1. The ἐπιθυμητικὸν

### 1.1. Proper desires of the appetitive part: physiological needs; desire for wealth

The ἐπιθυμητικὸν with its multitude of desires is “the largest part in each person’s soul”,<sup>193</sup> as in the city the wealth-loving part of it is also the biggest part (4.431a8). Its own diversity (πολυειδίαν, 9.580d11) makes it impossible to give it a single name and so it is called according to the central and strongest aspect, namely the intensity (σφοδρότητα τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν) of its many appetites (9.580e2-4). In this sense, desires for “the pleasures of nutrition and generation and their kind”,<sup>194</sup> such as thirst, hunger, sex and the like (9.580e3-4), which are

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individuals that rule the society. In the second case we have portraits of individuals governed by these leading desires. However, I do not imply by this that the *Republic* is simply a psychological treatise: I think it is a political work, as well as in a way also a treatise on education and on art, but based on a psychological theory.

<sup>193</sup> ...ὁ δὲ πλεῖστον τῆς ψυχῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἐστὶ... (4.442a5-6).

<sup>194</sup> ...ἐπιθυμοῦμεν...τῶν περὶ τὴν τροφήν τε καὶ γέννησιν ἡδονῶν καὶ ὅσα τούτων ἀδελφά... (4.436a10-b1).

related to a basic need for survival and self-preservation, are the most obvious (ἐναργεστάτας) desires of this part of the soul (4.437d3-4).<sup>195</sup>

The φιλοχρήματον, which becomes “a virtual synonym of the ἐπιθυμητικόν”,<sup>196</sup> is a sort of derivative manifestation of the ἐπιθυμητικόν. It is a “wealth-loving form” of the soul rather than just a “money-loving one”, insofar as this aspect of us is related to a desire for the appropriation of commodities in general, i.e. of χρήματα (‘goods, property’) and not just specifically of money.<sup>197</sup> As a result of its tendency to accumulate wealth it is also called “the gain-loving part” (the φιλοκερδές),<sup>198</sup> insofar as the making of a profit is a fundamental way to acquire more wealth.

## 1.2. Irrationality of the appetitive part

An essential characteristic of the appetitive part is its being ἀλογιστόν (4.439d7), i.e. incapable of calculation and, in this sense, irrational. This irrationality of the ἐπιθυμητικόν can be understood in two ways:

-The intensity, urge and bestiality of its appetites. This bestial urge and blind drive require, nevertheless, a minimum cognitive capacity in order to recognize the object of desire.

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<sup>195</sup> In relation to sex, hunger and thirst as typical desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν see also 4.439d6-8.

<sup>196</sup> See Shorey, vol. I (1946) [1930], p. 380, note *b*.

<sup>197</sup> See, for example, the extension of the desire of our appetitive aspect to all kind of property at 8.547b3-4, where it is said that the bronze and iron races pull “ἐπὶ χρημαστικὸν καὶ γῆς κτήσιν καὶ οἰκίας”.

<sup>198</sup> ἄρ’ οὖν καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ φιλίαν εἰ φαίμεν εἶναι τοῦ κέρδους... καὶ καλοῦντες αὐτὸ φιλοχρήματον καὶ φιλοκερδὲς ὁρθῶς ἂν καλοῖμεν; (“So if we were to say that the thing it took pleasure and delight in was profit, ... [a]nd if we were to call it money-loving and profit-loving, would we be justified?”) (9.581a3-7).

-Its insatiable and limitless nature, insofar as it is actually incapable of behaving according its own good as understood in relation to the whole soul, i.e. according to the limit required for its appetites.

### 1.2.1.Irrationality as a bestial urge

Appetites, in principle, have their origin in physiological needs and drive in an intense (9.580e2-3) and beast-like way (ὥσπερ θηρίον, 4.439b4) towards the replenishment of a state of emptiness of the body. This urge of the appetites does not require any “intervention or detour through reason”<sup>199</sup> and is actually related to the fact that they seek their objects without qualification and particularly without reference to the goodness/rightness of their objects and so without any calculation,<sup>200</sup> as we have seen in *Section I*. In fact the basic instinct of aggressiveness of the θυμοειδές is irrational in a similar way. However, while the ‘spirited’ part can be a helper of reason in its search for the truth and the real good, the intensity of the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν inevitably pulls the soul to the bodily and changeable and often against calculations made by reason.<sup>201</sup>

#### 1.2.1.1. Cognitive capacity of the ἐπιθυμητικόν<sup>202</sup>

Although the appetites’ drive is bestial and wild, some cognitive capacity seems to be required in order to enable them find and get their objects of desire. Let us consider now what this cognitive capacity would be like and compare it with reason’s cognitive capacities.

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<sup>199</sup> Cooper (1999), pp. 196-197.

<sup>200</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I**, pp. 107 ff..

<sup>201</sup> See 4.439c9-d2, d6-8.

<sup>202</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement**, pp. 180 ff. for further development of what is treated here.

#### **1.2.1.1.1. Tripartite division of the soul in the *Republic* from the point of view of desire**

Apart from the double attribution to the rational part of the desire for the truth and the real good and, at the same time, of its capacity of examining, arguing and calculating, in the *Republic* there is no consideration of the relation between the three parts of the soul and the cognitive capacities of the soul. In fact the absence of an account of this kind is not surprising, insofar as the division of the soul into three parts is mainly designed, as shown in *Section I*, from the point of view of desire and not from of the point of view of cognitive capacities. However, we can speculate as to what kind of cognitive capacity the ἐπιθυμητικόν might require -without necessarily attributing this cognitive capacity to the appetitive part- and what intellectual activities -such as judgement, calculation, etc.- can only be ascribed to the rational part; even when the appetites influence -and distort- the way that reason works.

#### **1.2.1.1.2. Cognitive capacity required by the appetites**

We can, at least plausibly, suppose that the intense urge of the appetites, while being without calculation, requires the minimum cognitive capacity of discrimination, insofar as human beings, as well as animals, need to be able to distinguish their objects of appetite. Even a butterfly has to be able to discriminate 'flower' from 'not flower' and 'nectar' from 'not nectar' in order to get the object of its desire, the food it needs to sustain its one day of life. For this kind of identification sense-perception seems to be required in order to register those objects that can provide for physiological needs. Moreover, appetites are related to the changeable and the bodily so sense perceptions, which take place in this same metaphysical realm, are likely to be the kind of cognitive activity that assists the appetites in the identification of their objects of desire. Insofar as appetites (and in fact any desires) are experienced most of the time before the actual presence of the object of desire, it is also necessary to suppose some kind of representation of the object of appetite to make the agent to look for it. However, raw sense perceptions

together with these internal representations do not seem to be sufficient: they would also need to be assisted by some kind of elementary rational discrimination or judgement, so that, even in the case of animals like a butterfly, some sort of λογιστικόν would be involved.<sup>203</sup> According to the explanation proposed here we do not need to presuppose that the cognitive capacity required by the appetitive part would be an aspect of the appetitive part itself: in all cases the senses would be instruments through which reason makes judgements.<sup>204</sup>

#### 1.2.1.1.3. Reason's judgements and opinions influenced by the appetites

References to judgements and beliefs of the appetitive part can be taken rather as judgements and beliefs which reason, that is the aspect of us that judges, produces from the sense information -and maybe the internal representations- that are present to the appetites.<sup>205</sup> These opinions and judgments are often wrong because the appetites connect the soul with the changeable, their object of satisfaction and pleasure -in this case the physiological needs are again the more obvious example- being always in the realm of the changeable.<sup>206</sup> Similarly, the suggestion that the ἐπιθυμητικόν, being φιλοχρήματον and φιλοκερδές,<sup>207</sup> might make calculations in terms of means and ends,<sup>208</sup> insofar as wealth is desired as a main instrument for the gratification of the intense physiological appetites (9.580e5-

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<sup>203</sup> If this means Plato attributes some kind of primitive λογιστικόν to animals, we may notice that his scheme of reincarnation seems to involve some such attribution in any case.

<sup>204</sup> On the vagueness in *Republic* in relation to the general function of αἰσθησις see Murphy (1951), p. 243.

<sup>205</sup> Differently Sorabji (1993), pp. 9-12.

<sup>206</sup> See, for example, 8.559b11 where Socrates suggests that the unnecessary desires are harmful for the body and also for the intelligence and reasonableness of the soul. See also below in **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement**, pp. 180 ff. my interpretation of the epistemological consequences of the analysis of the authentic and inauthentic pleasures in Book 9 and of the division of the parts of the soul in Book 10.

<sup>207</sup> See here p. 128 above.

<sup>208</sup> Price (1995), pp. 60-62 and 50-51.



581a1; 8.554a5-8) can also be understood in different way. As seen above,<sup>209</sup> the appetites drive towards their objects independently of their ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’. It is actually reason, as servant of the appetites and overcome by them, which will make calculations in terms of means and ends according to a goal alien to reason (as in the case of the oligarchic man at 8.553d1-4). In this way, the appetite for wealth as such, although it does not have a physiological origin, will maintain the pattern of the physiological needs from which the love for money originates, in the sense of being a pressing and irrational drive for money (i.e. without calculation and reasoning about how good and beneficial this is). For example, in the case of the greedy or avaricious person (which we may think of as the extreme case of someone dominated by his desire for money), besides calculating with his reason, which serves his dominant appetite, in order to get more and more wealth, he will also normally have an unlimited fondness for money -since reason does not rule- as an irrational resource of pleasure on its own, in a similar way to someone addicted to food or alcohol.<sup>210</sup> A hypothetical explanation of the origin of these non-physiological appetites, taking into account the role that habituation will have in the education of the appetitive part (see 8.559b8-c1),<sup>211</sup> may be drawn as follows: first reason may establish the search for money as an appropriate means when the satisfaction of the appetites dominates a person’s life; but afterwards the habitual search for money in order to satisfy the appetites creates or develops an appetite and irrational tendency towards wealth on its own.

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<sup>209</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I, 1.1. The deduction of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the λογιστικόν from ...**, pp. 109 ff..

<sup>210</sup> In the case of the ‘appetite for philosophy’ of the democratic man (8.561d2) we can also think that he wants knowledge or culture –the current meaning of φιλοσοφία– as something to be consumed like food, drink, etc. but without any real commitment to learning and looking for the truth. A similar contemporary example might be people who buy books of ‘general culture’ and accumulate them on shelves without any intention of seriously reading and studying them.

<sup>211</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3. The education of the appetites**, pp. 139 ff., especially **1.3.1. Habituation of the appetites** (pp. 140 ff.).

The ἐπιθυμητικόν's lack of capacity to calculate is fundamental for understanding its irrational condition as an incapacity to establish its own limits.<sup>212</sup>

### **1.2.2. Irrationality as insatiability and unlimited multiplication of the appetites**

The ἐπιθυμητικόν's incapacity for calculation or its being ἀλογιστόν seems to be connected not only to its urgent and bestial drive towards its objects but also to its failure to find its appropriate limit -it is ἀπληστότατον (4.442a7)- and satisfaction, insofar as the limits that the appetitive part requires can only be established by reason's calculations. Besides this, even when the appetitive aspect is limited to appetites that are necessary for basic survival, it will never be an active helper of reason in attaining the truth and the real good –as the 'spirited' part can be: in the best case, its necessary appetites would just contribute to maintaining the indispensable physical support.

#### **1.2.2.1. The limitless tendency of the ἐπιθυμητικόν in the origin of the luxurious city**

There are some hints of this tendency of the ἐπιθυμητικόν not to respect or recognize limits and develop unnecessary desires in what is said in relation to the transition to the πρώτη πόλις to the τρυφῶσα πόλις.<sup>213</sup> The state originates from the fact that we are in an essential state of need (χρεία, see 369c2) and a condition that is lacking rather than self-sufficient (ἡμῶν ἕκαστος οὐκ αὐτάρκης, ἀλλὰ πολλῶν ἐνδεής, 2.369b6-7). As a result of this each member of the community is in charge of providing one service that is needed by

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<sup>212</sup> For the ἐπιθυμητικόν the best is to get as much as possible. But, from the point of view of the calculations of the rational part, which takes into account the whole soul, the good thing for the appetites is to have limits.

<sup>213</sup> Thus, I assume that the description of the first city and the luxurious city not only offers an explanation about the origin of the state but also helps the understanding of the psychological structure of the individual. See n. 192.

him and the others, instead of all (2.369c1-4). In the pure natural state of the 'first city' the appetites are limited to the satisfaction of minimum and necessary needs, like food, housing and clothes and the like in order to take care of the body (2.369d1-10), in a way more similar to what happens to animals, whose inclinations are naturally limited to what is necessary to keep them alive. With the emergence of the luxurious city unnecessary appetites arise and human beings develop tendencies for things that they do not really need.<sup>214</sup> It is worth noting that, for example, Glaucon's complaint, from which the exposition of the luxurious city originates, is precisely focused on the simplicity of the diet and the basic way of satisfying the desire for food, which is one of the most representative examples of the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, in the first city (2.372c4-d3). The fact that the members of the luxurious city abandon themselves to the acquisition of unlimited wealth<sup>215</sup> also suggests the development of the unlimited tendencies of the

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<sup>214</sup> From 2.369b5 to 2.372d3 Socrates develops the description of the 'first city' (πρῶτη πόλις) that would represent an ideal human community based only on necessary human needs. The ideal state would come to be through purification of the unhealthy and luxurious city (τρυφῶσαν πόλιν, 3.372e3). This is probably related to the fact that Plato considers it impossible in the forms of social organization available to him that people could ever restrain their demands for natural needs. Therefore he imagines his ideal state just as the best possible improvement from the given situation of a society (and a human being) that has already developed unlimited needs. The principle of specialization of labour of the first city is extended to the luxurious city but now taking in account unnecessary as well as necessary needs. In it, besides the farmers, builders, weavers (2.369d7-8), cobblers (2.370d3), carpenters, smiths, craftsmen (2.370d5-6), sailors, traders (2.371a11-b2), shopkeepers (2.371d4-5) and wage earners (2.371e5), needed in the first city, there are imitators of all kinds (2.373b5), manufacturers of all kinds (2.373c8), tutors, nurses, beauty-shop ladies, barbers, cooks, chefs (2.373c2-4). Finally, because of the need for more territory due to the enlargement of the city, an army comes to be necessary (2.373e9-374a2). For the constitution of this army people who might have more skill and competence in this specific task than anybody else (2.374d8-e2) -the guardians- are required, while for the government of the city it is philosophers trained in dialectics that are needed.

<sup>215</sup> ...ἐάν καὶ ἐκεῖνοι ἀφῶσιν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ χρημάτων κτῆσιν ἀπειρον, ὑπερβάντες τὸν τῶν ἀναγκαίων ὅρον.... ("...if they too give themselves up to the pursuit of unlimited wealth, not confining themselves to necessities...") (2.373d9-10).

ἐπιθυμητικόν with the emergence of the luxurious city. Besides, the requirement of limit and selection in the satisfaction of desires such as thirst and hunger appears clearly formulated in relation to the appropriate diet for the guardians.<sup>216</sup> Even the houses of the guardians must be conceived only to protect them from the coldness of winter and the heat of summer (415e6-7). Actually the guardians are the ones who have more strict limits imposed on the desire for wealth through the stipulation of common property and little wealth (4.416d4-417b8). At 3.404e3-4 ff. it is shown that many physical diseases also derive from this tendency of our appetitive part to become unlimited in its desire and in that sense without possible satisfaction.<sup>217</sup> For example, in the luxurious city the natural desire for eating (in order to keep oneself alive) is replaced by a corrupted desire for looking for pleasure through eating (4.404d1). So the necessary desire for eating degenerates into an unnecessary desire, which cannot find the appropriate limit and it seems that it is in this sense that it is unable to recognize its own good.

#### 1.2.2.2. Necessary and unnecessary appetites

The distinction, in the discussion of the appetitive part in Book 8, between necessary and unnecessary desires (τὰ ἀναγκαίους ἐπιθυμίας καὶ τὰς μή, 8.558d9) gives a further development of this point that not all our appetites are inevitably guided by our needs.

**a) Necessary desires:** These are either desires that we cannot suppress because otherwise we suppress our own existence or desires that, without being absolutely indispensable, are in some way beneficial to us. In other words our nature compels

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<sup>216</sup> The quantity and quality of the drink and food is determined according to what is beneficial not just for the body but especially for the whole soul in order to keep its harmonious state (3.404a9-b2).

<sup>217</sup> From 3.405a on together with the discussion of the requirements of the best kind of medicine for the ideal state, there is probably incidental criticism of the medical practice of the time.

us to seek their satisfaction or at least their satisfaction does us some good.<sup>218</sup> Thirst, hunger, sex<sup>219</sup> -some of our physiological needs- are basic expressions of this kind of desires in the sense that we cannot eradicate them without eliminating ourselves. The derivative desire for wealth of the appetitive part,<sup>220</sup> seems to be the most obvious example of the necessary desires as the ones that are helpful, insofar as wealth is clearly something useful for doing other things and in this sense it represents in general the desire for the acquisition of material things (9.580e5-581a1), including those necessary for one's own survival. Their utility, in the sense of being productive (χρησιμός), is another characteristic of the necessary desires.<sup>221</sup>

However, even these necessary desires of our appetitive aspect have a tendency to exceed their function and in this sense to become unnecessary and harmful: hunger can become a search for food that damages the body and, as a consequence, the soul.<sup>222</sup> Something similar could probably be said about sexual

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<sup>218</sup> οὐκοῦν ἅς τε οὐκ ἂν οἶοι τ' εἶμεν ἀποτρέψαι, δικαίως ἂν ἀναγκαῖαι καλοῖντο, καὶ ὅσαι ἀποτελούμεναι ὠφελούσιν ἡμᾶς; τούτων γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων ἐφίεσθαι ἡμῶν τῇ φύσει ἀνάγκη. ἦ οὐ; ("Is it the ones we can't deny which can properly be called necessary –plus the ones whose satisfaction does us some good? Our nature demands that we try to satisfy both these classes, doesn't it?") (8.558d11-e3). So Plato does not have a wholly negative consideration of these desires (differently ch. 1 of Gosling (1983a), pp. 20-22). For example, hunger with appropriate limits does not necessarily lead to gluttony. Similarly in the 'first city' physical needs are limited to what is necessary.

<sup>219</sup> At 8.559c3-7 it is explicitly said that the appetites περὶ ἀφροδισίων, like others, can be profitable –if they help production.

<sup>220</sup> Love of money is the typical desire that governs the oligarchic man, who in a more general sense is governed by the necessary desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν (see 8.554a5-8).

<sup>221</sup> ..ἐκείνας δὲ χρηματιστικὰς διὰ τὸ χρησίμους πρὸς τὰ ἔργα εἶναι. ("...the others [i.e. the necessary desires] are productive, because they contribute to some function...") (8.559c3-4).

<sup>222</sup> See, for example, 8.559b10-11 where it is said that the excess of food damages the body and is also an obstacle to intelligence and temperance.

desire: it is a desire which is necessary for procreation but -very easily in human nature- surpasses the limits of this function. The love of wealth can also become a desire for the possession of material things beyond the proper limit. This happens embryonically even to the timocratic man<sup>223</sup> but is an inherent characteristic of the oligarchic man.<sup>224</sup> This very voracity for wealth of the oligarchic man paves the way for the growth of the unnecessary desires in the democratic man.<sup>225</sup> This is also the reason for the development of the tyrant governed by a destructive ruling passion or ἔρωσ (see 9.573d ff.). In other words, it seems that the starting point for becoming a tyrant is the transformation of the necessary desires into unnecessary by the rejection of the limit that must come from the λογιστικόν according to its judgement of what is good and bad.

**b) Unnecessary desires:** These desires are for “spendthrift” and “expensive” (ἀναλωτικοί)<sup>226</sup> pleasures i.e. pleasures that spend but do not produce wealth.<sup>227</sup> These desires do no good and sometimes even harm.<sup>228</sup> An example would be the appetite (ἐπιθυμία) for more than the necessary or good kinds of food (like roasted meat 4.404c2). Because of the sterility and potential harm of these desires

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<sup>223</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3.2.1. The secret growth of the desire for wealth in the timocratic man**, p. 143.

<sup>224</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3.2.2. The emergence of unnecessary desires in the oligarch man**, p. 144.

<sup>225</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3.3.3. The overcome of the democratic man’s soul by the unnecessary desires: the tyrannical life**, p. 145.

<sup>226</sup> See LSJ, s.v. ἀναλωτικός. A later sense of the word –not in Plato– is ‘consuming’. The idea of calling the pleasures of the unnecessary desires ‘spendthrift’ (ἀναλωτικοί) is that they just spend or consume but do not produce anything good and can even be harmful (like the drones).

<sup>227</sup> ... τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ ἡδονῶν, ὅσαι ἀναλωτικαὶ μὲν, χρηματιστικαὶ δὲ μή· αἱ δὲ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖαι κέκληνται- (“...those desires within him which are extravagant and not money-making –the ones called unnecessary desires.”) (8.558d4-6).

<sup>228</sup> ἅς γέ τις ἀπαλλάξειεν ἄν, εἰ μελετῷ ἐκ νέου, καὶ πρὸς οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν ἐνοῦσαι δρῶσιν (“What about the desires you *can* get rid of, if you work at it from childhood, the ones moreover whose presence does you no good –may even perhaps do you some harm?”) (8.559a3-6).

they are said to govern the drones, i.e. persons who do no useful work and live off others or, in other words, whose life is led by the desire for not producing themselves but for taking from others. In this sense these desires are unproductive.

A sub-species and extreme expression of the unnecessary desires is represented by the lawless unnecessary desires of our appetitive aspect that are mentioned at 9.517a-7-8. In this passage it is established that something else must be said about the nature and number of our appetites. The tendency of the unnecessary desires to go beyond limits has its utmost expression in appetites that normally appear just in dreams and do not respect even the most basic cultural laws, for example the prohibition of incest, of the unjust and cruel murder of another human being i.e. desires that do not recognize even basic social limits and legality.<sup>229</sup> Although these desires can be suppressed or at least weakened in a few people (9.571b-c), the bestial and monstrous tendency is a constitutive part of all us, as is clearly said at 9.572b:

ὁ δὲ βουλόμεθα γινῶναι τόδ' ἐστίν, ὥς ἄρα δεινόν τι καὶ ἄγριον καὶ ἄνομον ἐπιθυμιῶν εἶδος ἐκάστω ἔνεστι, καὶ πάνυ δοκοῦσιν ἡμῶν ἐνίοις μετρίοις εἶναι· τοῦτο δὲ ἄρα ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις γίνεται ἔνδηλον.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> τῶν μὴ ἀναγκαίων ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν δοκοῦσί τινές μοι εἶναι παράνομοι ("Among the unnecessary pleasures and desires there are some which seem to me to be violent or lawless.") (9.571b4-5).

<sup>230</sup> "What we need to know is that there is in everyone *a terrible, untamed and lawless class of desires*—even in those of us who appear to be completely normal. This becomes quite clear in our sleep." (9.572b3-7).

In other words a tyrannical monster lives inside every man and only philosophy can make us, who are potential wolf-like creatures,<sup>231</sup> into god-like beings.

### 1.3. The education of the appetites

#### 1.3.1. Appropriate education of the appetites

At least in our actual existence, the appetitive part cannot be completely suppressed so that its bestiality and blind urge continue to pull the soul in the opposite direction to reason's desire for the truth and the real good. However, a man can achieve release from the unnecessary appetites through appropriate training<sup>232</sup> and impose appropriate limits on the rest of his appetites. In this way the stream of the appetites is reduced as much as possible in order not to interfere with reason's search for the truth and the real good, and also not weaken the 'spirited' part.

This training is one of the aims of the earlier education of the guardians described in Books 2 and 3 and seems basically to consist in a habituation of the desires, which is attained by stimulating or atrophying them in the appropriate way.<sup>233</sup> The

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<sup>231</sup> The tyrant, who has completely released his lawless appetites not in his dreams but in his life is compared with a wolf (8.565d9-e1). On our potentiality for being tyrants that only philosophy can really constrain see ch. 1 of Gosling (1983a), p.20.

<sup>232</sup> ...ἡ πέρα τούτων καὶ ἀλλοίων ἐδεσμάτων ἢ τοιούτων ἐπιθυμία, *δυνατὴ δὲ κολαζομένη ἐκ νέων καὶ παιδευομένη ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν ἀπαλλάττεσθαι* ("...the appetite that exceeds these [i.e. the necessary desires] and seeks other varieties of food, and *that by correction and training from youth up can be got rid of in most cases...*") (8.559b8-c10). (I follow here Shorey's translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith's translation).

<sup>233</sup> Gill (1985) thinks that, whereas the earlier education of the young guardians concentrates on the education of love of wisdom and of the 'spirited' part and higher education focuses upon the development of the rational part, there is essentially no training of the appetitive part in the programme of education of the *Republic*. On the contrary, I think that there is a programme for appropriate training of the appetitive part in the earlier education so that, as adults, the young



right education of the other two parts also helps to develop the appetites within appropriate limits. The musical education of the rational part contributes to this aim in the following way: some of the right beliefs which are contained in the stories that the young guardians are told support the inculcation of the habits that they have acquired; imitation of good characters and narration are the only ways admitted for telling the stories not only in order to fortify the development of reason's love of wisdom but also to avoid the over-development of base things of the soul such as the appetites; only rhythms, harmonies and instruments that promote unchangeableness, familiarity with goodness and beauty and good states of the soul are admitted, while the ones that encourage the appetites are avoided. The training of the 'spirited' part for fighting against the appetites also plays an important role in keeping the appetites within the appropriate limits.

#### **1.3.1.1. Habituation of the appetites**

What the young guardians see and hear (2.378b1-5; 3.386a1-4; 3.388d2-7; esp. 3.390a8-d5) is the model to be reproduced in their own lives. For this reason,<sup>234</sup> from the very beginning, they hardly know about other kinds of behaviour, whether in stories or, probably, in real life as well;<sup>235</sup> they only know the appropriate ones –i.e. people who do not eat too much, do not drink too much, are not too fond of sex- and tend to reproduce and copy those habits and patterns of character. This means that, in relation to their appetites, the young guardians develop and employ just useful appetites with appropriate limits and in this way

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guardians can become just men in whom the appetitive part causes less trouble because it is wisely satisfied –being neither starved nor over-indulged-, as described at 9.571e1-2.

<sup>234</sup> The fact that habits are acquired by reproduction of what the young person sees outside him is clear in the case of the philosophical natures that are corrupted because of what they witness in different kinds of public assemblies (6.492a-493 a2).

<sup>235</sup> At 3.395d3 it is said that imitation creates a "second nature", i.e. a permanent condition but acquired by the means of culture and education, not naturally bestowed to the individual. Although this refers exclusively to artistic imitation, it can be extended to describe the reproduction of the behaviour of the people that surround the child.

only these appetites are stimulated, while the others will be atrophied or not promoted in any way (see especially 9.571e1). In this sense no force will be needed later to repress the appetites (9.589b1-3) (as it is needed in the case of the timocratic (8.549b1-5) and the oligarchic man (554d2-3)) insofar as the appetites, being already appropriately constituted, will naturally tend not to be unlimited but “held in check by the laws and by better desires in alliance with reason” (9.571b6-c1) and, being rightly satisfied, will not interfere with reason’s work (9.572a3). The rational patterns or appropriate limits for training their appetites come from the educators, whose reason has already been appropriately trained together with the rest of the desires of their souls<sup>236</sup> (the ‘outside-inside’ process of education).<sup>237</sup>

For example, an appropriate diet determines and limits hunger or the appetite for food and drink through habituation: if from the beginning of his life a person only eats certain kinds of things and in a certain way and amount, his appetites and tastes for food and drink develop in that way (3.404a9-c9 and especially 8.559a3-b6). In the case of the young guardians, they are not allowed to be drunk (3.403e4-6) and they have to abstain from sweetmeats and avoid Syracusan and Sicilian style of food and Attic pastries since their variety encourages disease (3.404d1-e4). Similarly medicine in the ideal city would only contribute to keeping the body in good health but not to curing the body from the excessive replenishments of its unlimited and unnecessary appetites. In this way medicine does not promote their infinite multiplication (3.406c1-408c4). Similarly, the attachment to material belongings is not stimulated in the guardians (3.416c5-417b8) in order to try to impose appropriate limits to the desire for wealth from the very beginning.

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<sup>236</sup> See 590e2-591a3.

<sup>237</sup> According to Lear, education consists in a double process of ‘internalization’ –“the process of taking cultural influences inside the psyché”- and of ‘externalization’ –the process which is “going on primarily in adults who have already formed themselves through prior cultural internalizations” (Lear (1992), pp. 181 and 193).

### 1.3.1.2. Right λόγοι as a support of right habituation of the appetites

The musical education of the love of wisdom of the rational part also contributes to the development of the young guardian's habits within appropriate limits. While their appetites are trained in the right way, through the stories that they hear they also acquire right beliefs such as that controlling the appetites is the right thing to do. In other words the λόγοι that they learn corroborate and express in words what they actually at the same time acquire through the reproduction of kinds of behaviours and the development of good habits. The case of the appetite for wealth is one of the clearest examples of how an appetite is constituted both through right practice and habituation and the acquisition of right beliefs: the young guardians actually live with few material facilities (3.416c5-417b8) and simultaneously learn, through the stories they hear, that to desire to possess too much is not good, insofar as stories that show meanness and excess in the appetite for wealth in gods or men are condemned.<sup>238</sup>

Moreover, imitation of noble characters and narration as the only ways admitted for telling stories in the musical education of the young guardians help to avoid actual reproduction of bad characters such as people with unrestrained appetites and excessive contact with the bodily and changeable; contact which promotes the base things of the soul such as deceptive perceptions, overdeveloped emotions and appetites. Similarly, in relation to rhythms and harmonies: on the one hand, the musical modes, such as Dorian and Phrygian modes, and harmonies that are preferred encourage bravery and rationality (3.399a3-c4) and put the soul in contact with the unchangeable (3.397c6-d5) and the good and the beautiful; but, on the other hand, the avoidance of modes such as the Ionian and Lydian modes, because they encourage laziness and luxury (3.398e2-399a2), also contributes to inhibiting an inappropriate overdevelopment of the appetites.

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<sup>238</sup> Examples of excess in drinking (3.389e13-390a7), eating (3.390a8-b5) and having sex (especially in the case of the gods) (3.390b6-c7) have to be avoided.

### 1.3.1.3. The θυμοειδές' help in the control of the appetites

The 'spirited' part is developed through physical training (3.410b1-3; d3-9). In the ideal education of the guardians, the θυμοειδές has its aggressiveness habituated to struggle for the aims of the λογιστικόν, such as the 'fight' against the pull of the appetites: for example, to resist hunger and coldness if it is necessary, although the appetites will pull in the opposite direction (see, for example, 4.440c1-5). In this way it contributes to reason's control over the appetitive part.

### 1.3.2. Inappropriate education of the appetites

However, most people are unjust and have their appetites promoted in their unlimited multiplication beyond what is necessary through an inappropriate education. In Books 8 and 9 the evolution from the best kind of unjust life -the timocratic way of life- to the worst kind of life -the tyrannical existence- has its roots in an increasing degeneration of the appetites. This deterioration starts with the presence of the repressed -necessary- desire for wealth of the timocratic man and evolves into the ruling ἔρωξ that protects the lawless desires in the tyrant. The words that the child hears and the kinds of behaviours that he has witnessed, and the kind of education or lack of education that he has had play a fundamental role in this degeneration.

#### 1.3.2.1. The secret growth of the desire for wealth in the timocratic man

In the case of the timocratic man, although he loves honour, fame and victory, he secretly desires wealth and possession of material things as well, being avaricious in the way that oligarchs are (8.548a5-6).<sup>239</sup> Although he prizes wealth, he cannot possess it openly and so secretly he runs away from the laws like a child from his

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<sup>239</sup> Actually the deterioration of the aristocratic regime into a timocratic regime, as the first form of unjust regime, seems to have its origin in the admission of the desire for wealth by the rulers. New generations of the golden and silver races originate from copulations out of season so that these superior men deteriorate and accept into the government the tendency ἐπὶ χρηματισμόν καὶ γῆς κτήσιν καὶ οἰκίας (8.547b3-4), which comes from the bronze and iron races.

father (8.548a6-b2). His secret love for wealth becomes more obvious in old age (8.549a9-b1). This secret love for wealth has its origin in what he listens to and sees (8.550a5) in his early childhood –namely, his mother’s and slaves’ criticisms of his just father’s lack of interest for money and private prosecutions (8.549c2 ff.); so that, while his father waters and encourages the growth of the rational principle in his soul, the others promote the appetitive and the ‘spirited’ (8.550b6). Besides this, his reason is weak, insofar as he has not had an adequate musical education<sup>240</sup> and so has not been trained by persuasion but by force (8.548b7-c2; 8.549b1-7).<sup>241</sup> All this means that, on the one hand, the ‘spirited’ part, though developed through activities such as physical training, war (8.547d6-548a3), and hunting (8.549a7), has not been habituated to be an auxiliary of reason and pull against the appetites and, on the other hand, reason has not been in contact with beauty and goodness through a right musical education. All this paves the way for the development of the appetites without limit as in the case of the appetite for wealth.

### 1.3.2.2. The emergence of unnecessary desires in the oligarchic man

The oligarchic man, similarly to the oligarchic constitution, prizes wealth more than anything (τῷ χρήματα περὶ πλείστου ποιεῖσθαι, 8.554a2). Although he normally satisfies only his necessary desires, some other more negative desires that he normally represses in order not to lose his fortune arise in him in certain circumstances in which he can do injustice (8.554b6-d8) and he can keep them in control only by force (8.554d2-3; c1-2). These unnecessary desires have evolved within him because of his lack of education (ἀπαιδευσίαν 8.554b8), which makes his rational part and his ‘spirited’ aspect weak and feeble, as they are described at 8.553d4-7; 8.554d10-1; 8.554e7; 8.555a6.

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<sup>240</sup>He is ὑποαμυνώτερον (548e4-5).

<sup>241</sup> For this reason, though being a lover of music and fond of speeches, he lacks culture (8.548e-8.549a), and welcomes reason only if it brings honour.

### 1.3.2.3. The overcoming of democratic man's soul by the unnecessary desires: the tyrannical life

Democracy has its origin in a further evolution of the desire for wealth (8.555b8-10). The democratic man is bred with a taste for necessary appetites -because of his father's love for wealth- but also for the unnecessary appetites -because of the kind of associates with which he is surrounded (9.572c1-e4). Besides this, because of the lack of culture of his father, the democratic man grows up with the citadel of his soul empty of -and so unprotected by- beautiful studies, customs and words (τὴν τοῦ νέου τῆς ψυχῆς ἀκρόπολιν [...] κενὴν μαθημάτων τε καὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων καλῶν καὶ λόγων ἀληθῶν, 8.560b8-9) so that, with the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές weakened, his obsession for getting more and more wealth helps the invasion of the unnecessary desires in his soul (8.560a9-b2).<sup>242</sup> In the case of the tyrant, his unnecessary appetites, but more specifically the lawless desires, are encouraged early in his life by the people that surround him (ἀγόμενόν τε εἰς πᾶσαν παρανομίαν, 9.572d9-e1). Finally these lawless and unnecessary desires are led by a passion that rules the soul and protects them (ἔρωτά τινα...τῶν ἀργῶν καὶ...ἐπιθυμιῶν, 9.572e5-573a2) in the sense that all worthy opinions and appetites are destroyed (9.573b), with the result that the life of the tyrant becomes focused only on gratifying his wasteful appetites at any price (9.573e-574a). So at the opposite end of the spectrum from the life led by the passion for the truth -the life of the philosopher- we find the tyrant: a man led by a tyrannical passion (ἔρως) engendered by his lawless desires.

## 1.4. Conclusion

In the symbolic image of the soul in Book 9 there is a illustrative summary of the characteristics of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and its constitutive desires:

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<sup>242</sup> At the political level this is reflected in the following way: the avarice of the oligarchic ruler causes the drones (8.552b6-e8), who finally will eliminate the oligarchic men, who represent the necessary desires (8.564a10-e8).

πλάττε τοίνυν μίαν μὲν ἰδέαν θηρίου ποικίλου καὶ πολυκεφάλου, ἡμέρων δὲ θηρίων ἔχοντος κεφαλὰς κύκλῳ καὶ ἀγρίων, καὶ δυνατοῦ μεταβάλλειν καὶ φύειν ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντα ταῦτα.<sup>243</sup>

Its having the aspect of a θήρ represents its bestial urges, while the multiheaded character of the beast symbolizes the multitude of appetites that constitute it. The gentle heads of the monster will be the necessary desires and the wild ones the unnecessary, especially the lawless ones. Then there is a reference to the possibility of transforming the appetites. This may be interpreted in a positive way: with reason's introduction of limits and laws, i.e. with appetites appropriately habituated, the wise and just man, with the help of the θυμοειδές, also rightly trained, only has necessary desires and the unnecessary are suppressed or at least weakened. But it may also be understood in a negative way: with appetites not educated within appropriate limits the necessary desires become unnecessary and the unnecessary and lawless desires evolve further. The possibility of the unlimited reproduction of the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν is symbolized by the many heads that can grow from this beast-like aspect of us.

Let us now return to the 'hydraulic image' of the soul at 6.485d6-8. There it is asserted that our desires in general<sup>244</sup> need to be diverted from our earlier childhood into the channel of learning through education 6.485d3-4 and be concerned with the pleasures of soul (not of body) so that the person can become a philosopher or lover of wisdom (6.485d10-e1). In order that the 'stream' of reason's desire for the truth and the real good should be the stronger, one of the conditions (together with the acquisition of right beliefs in relation to the

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<sup>243</sup> "Start with a single species, then. A complex, many-headed beast, with a ring of animal heads—some gentle, some fierce— which it can vary and produce out of itself." (9.588c7-10).

<sup>244</sup> ἐπιθυμίαι here refers to all our desires, not only the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν. See n. 161.

management of appetites) is the appropriate habituation and limitation of the urgent appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν. Thus, their ‘current’ (which is normally big and with tendencies to become even bigger and unlimited) is diminished and they grow within appropriate limits. In this way they let reason rule, insofar as, they do not make the soul spend most of the time solving their potentially infinite concerns. In addition to this, the reduction of the appetites is also beneficial for the development of reason given that it contributes to decreasing the soul’s connection with the changeable as well, which connection blocks reason’s search for the truth and the real good, as a result of reason being in contact with appearances. At the same time when the appetites develop within the appropriate limits the aggressiveness and self-assertiveness of the θυμοειδές are not overdeveloped because it can be appropriately trained and, in this way, supportive of reason’s goals through its ‘fight’ against the appetites. Otherwise, without appropriate training in combination with a corrupted reason, the ‘spirited’ part becomes wild and, in the end, as the appetites evolve in a limitless way without reason’s control, the θυμοειδές is weakened by them so that the appetites’ powerful ‘stream’ in the soul can potentially become so strong (9.572e5-573a2) that a ruling ἔρως that is directed to the gratification of the lawless unnecessary desires can lead that life.



## 2. The θυμοειδές

### 2.1. Aggressiveness and assertiveness as characteristics of the ‘spirited’ part

The θυμοειδές is the part of the soul with which someone feels anger (τὸ δὲ... ὧ θυμοῦται, 4.439e3).<sup>245</sup> This aggressiveness is understood as strength to confront and face the dangers of the world -its possessor can be a horse, dog or any other creature (including a human being)- and can be defined in a more general sense as a sort of primary disposition of self-assertion to confront all sorts of external and internal situations:<sup>246</sup>

ἀνδρείος δὲ εἶναι ἄρα ἐθελήσει ὁ μὴ θυμοειδὴς εἴτε ἵππος εἴτε κύων ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν ζῶον; ἢ οὐκ ἐννενόηκας ὡς ἀμαχόν τε καὶ ἀνίκητον θυμός, οὗ παρόντος ψυχὴ πᾶσα πρὸς πάντα ἀφοβός τέ ἐστι καὶ ἀήττητος;<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> In Homer θυμός is a “source of action, especially vigorous action, and the seat of emotion, especially those emotions (anger, for example, but also on occasion sexual passion) that motivate vigorous and bold action” (Cooper (1999), pp. 199-200).

<sup>246</sup> Similarly Hobbs (2000), p. 9.

<sup>247</sup> “But is any living creature likely to be brave –whether horse or dog or anything else- if it doesn’t have a spirited and energetic nature? *Haven’t you noticed what an irresistible and unconquerable thing spirit is? With spirit, any living creature is fearless and invincible in the face of any danger.*” (2.375a11-b2). Here “ἀνδρείος” is used in a wider sense than in the *Laches* and in other parts of the *Republic*, for example 4.429c5-d2 and 4.442b11-c3. Furthermore animals and slaves without the appropriate education cannot be called truly “brave” (4.430b6-9). See also 2.375a9 ff. where it is already established that the aggressiveness of the θυμοειδές is good only when properly directed by the love of wisdom. Similarly in the *Laches* at 196e Socrates says that if ἀνδρεία is a sort of ἐπιστήμη animals cannot have it. Nicias agrees and adds that his definition of courage does not apply to children either because they are ignorant about what is to be feared and what is not. So Nicias establishes a difference between courage, which implies knowledge, and audaciousness, which is common among men, women, children or animals.

Similarly in the city the θυμοειδές is τοῦτο τὸ μέρος ὃ προπολεμεῖ τε καὶ στρατεύεται ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς.<sup>248</sup> In other words the θυμοειδές represents an instinct to fight or to be angry, as is indicated through the use of τὴν ὀργήν to refer to it (4.440c1-8) and verbs like μάχομαι (439e10), πολεμέω (4.440a5-6), ὀργίζομαι, ἐγείρομαι, ζέω, χαλεπαίνω and συμμαχῶ (4.440c2-8) to describe actions proper to the ‘spirited’ part of the soul.<sup>249</sup>

This impulse to face dangers, which is represented in the symbolic image of the soul as a lion (9.588d),<sup>250</sup> is ἁμαχόν τε καὶ ἀνίκητον (see 2.375b1), in the sense that it seeks and desires renown and predominance:

Τί δέ; τὸ θυμοειδές οὐ πρὸς τὸ κρατεῖν μέντοι φαμέν καὶ νικᾶν καὶ εὐδοκιμεῖν ἀεὶ ὅλον ὥρμησθαι;<sup>251</sup>

Thus the θυμοειδές has as its inherent desire the desire for victory and honour (φιλόνικον αὐτὸ καὶ φιλότιμον, 9.581b2). The relationship between its desire for honour and its desire for victory seems to be that the desire of the

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<sup>248</sup> “... the part which makes war in the city’s defence, and serves in its army ...” (4.429b2-3).

<sup>249</sup> In Books 2 and 3 the tripartite theory of the soul is already present, although it has not been openly developed yet (for which reason Hobbs (2000), p. 7 prefers to speak in these books of θυμός instead of the θυμοειδές).

<sup>250</sup> I.e. an animal known for ferociously facing any danger. It is also represented as a snake since this was an animal usually thought as a protector and defender of sacred places (see Griffith (2000), p. 310, n.21). The comparison to a wild beast is also related with the irrationality of this part of the soul.

<sup>251</sup> “What about the spirited part? Can we say, by contrast, that its sole and constant aim is power, victory and reputation?” (9.581a9-10). Something similar is expressed at 4.440c7-d3 but only in relation to the fight of the θυμοειδές on the side of reason.

θυμοειδές consists in the ambition to be successful and victorious in getting what is worthy of being honoured and fought for.<sup>252</sup>

## 2.2. ‘Bivalent’ condition of the θυμοειδές: aggressiveness against or in favour of reason

The θυμοειδές can strive for honour and victory using its natural and inherent assertiveness in two different ways. Either it can be divorced from reason and so easily be overwhelmed by our irrational beast-like desires, or it can be guided by reason, and so only seek its objects when it is appropriate according to what is good and what is not. Let us consider these two possibilities of the θυμοειδές, which we described in *Section I* as a sort of bivalent condition of the ‘spirited’ part of the soul.<sup>253</sup> Firstly, let us examine in the first place how the θυμοειδές works when it is independent of the rule of our rational aspect.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> For this reason Cooper (1999) pp. 202-206 says that all the motivations that have their roots in the θυμοειδές have in common the desire for “competitive success and the esteem from others and oneself that comes with it” (p. 205). Similarly Hobbs (2000), p. 30 says that in Plato’s *Republic* the θυμός is essentially “a tendency to form an ideal image of oneself in accordance with one’s conception of the fine and noble. This ideal of oneself also needs to be confirmed by social recognition”.

<sup>253</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I, 1.2. The deduction of the θυμοειδές from ...**, pp. 119 ff. For the θυμοειδές as an obscure concept and state that Plato fails to distinguish from noble courage see Robinson (1995) p. 45, who follows Cornford. For a good recent account of the *status quaestionis* in relation to this point see Hobbs (2000), pp. 3-6). I try to show here that a coherent interpretation of this part of the soul is possible.

<sup>254</sup> For the independence of the ‘spirited’ part in relation to the advice of reason see the example of Odysseus (4.441b) in **Chapter 2, Section I, 1.2. The deduction of the θυμοειδές from ...**, pp. 119 ff..

### 2.2.1. The θυμοειδές divorced from reason

#### 2.2.1.1. The ‘spirited’ part’s rejection of reason’s ‘advice’

The rejection of reason’s advice means two things: a) the ‘spirited’ part has not been rightly trained to fight and defend only appropriate goals (see below *Section II, 2.4. The education of the θυμοειδές*, p. 167 ff.); b) the ‘spirited’ part rules the soul and does not allow reason to establish what is good and bad on its own but has it working to achieve the ‘spirited’ part’s aims, i.e. victory and honour. Besides insofar as the θυμοειδές looks for material -inauthentic- pleasures, as the appetitive part does, it makes the λογιστικόν be in contact with what is changeable and with appearances and so to hold false opinions and judgements (see 9.586c7-d2 and below *Section II, 3.3.1.*, pp. 180 ff.).

If the aggressiveness (τὸ ἄγριον) of the ‘spirited’ part has been developed through physical training -γυμναστική- but not trained through habituation to attack what and when it is appropriate to attack (against the ‘pull’ of the appetites, against the enemies of the city) and, at the same time, there has been a lack of stimulation of the love of wisdom through the artistic education -μουσική- (and maybe lack of control of the appetites as well), the person becomes hard and ruthless (σκληρός...τε καὶ χαλεπός)<sup>255</sup> instead of brave (ἀνδρείος) (3.410d6-9). In this case the ‘spirited’ part rejects reason’s advice –i.e. a) it does not attack appropriate enemies because of not being correctly trained; b) it does not allow reason to establish what is good by dominating the soul- and goes directly for its own goals like a beast:

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<sup>255</sup> But too much artistic education without physical training also dissolves the ‘spirited’ part (3.411a5-c3). This is not desirable either because in that case the person becomes too soft and gentle (3.410d). An appropriate blend of the rational principle and the ‘spirited’ principle is the most profitable for the guardian: 2.375c6-8; 3.411e4-412a2; 6.503b7 ff.

μισόλογος δὴ οἶμαι ὁ τοιοῦτος γίνεται καὶ ἄμουσος, καὶ πειθοῖ μὲν διὰ λόγων οὐδὲν ἔτι χρῆται, βία δὲ καὶ ἀγριότητι ὥσπερ θηρίον πρὸς πάντα διαπράττεται, καὶ ἐν ἀμαθίᾳ καὶ σκαιότητι μετὰ ἀρρυθμίας τε καὶ ἀχαριστίας ζῇ.<sup>256</sup>

In fact the greatest crimes are performed by natures of great ardour (ἐκ νεανικῆς φύσεως, 6.491e4-5) but corrupted by a deficient education (τροφῇ διολομένης γίγνεσθαι, 6.491e5), i.e. not appropriately trained or orientated by reason.

In the case of the lover of honour at 9.586c7-d2 we find a similar situation: the θυμοειδὲς looks for its proper pleasure without being guided by reason and so the desire for honour makes the man envious and his love of victory makes him violent:

τί δέ; περὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς οὐχ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα ἀνάγκη γίγνεσθαι, ὅς ἂν αὐτὸ τοῦτο διαπράττεται ἢ φθόνῳ διὰ φιλοτιμίαν ἢ βίᾳ διὰ φιλονικίαν ἢ θυμῷ διὰ δυσκολίαν, πλησμονὴν τιμῆς τε καὶ νίκης καὶ θυμοῦ διώκων ἄνευ λογισμοῦ τε καὶ νοῦ,<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> "Someone like this becomes an enemy of rational argument, I suspect, and an enemy of music and literature. He abandons any attempt at persuasion using rational argument, and does everything with savage violence, like a wild animal. He lives his life in ignorance and stupidity without grace and rhythm." (3. 411d7-e2).

<sup>257</sup> "What about the spirited part of the soul? Aren't the same sorts of things bound to happen to anyone who concentrates on that? Love of honour leads to envy, love of victory to violence, and bad temper to anger. Without reason and understanding, he sets out in pursuit of his full measure of success, or victory, or anger." (9.586c7-d2). 'The same sort of things' refers to what happens to the 'lover of wealth', who cultivates insane passions because, in their ignorance of the truth, he goes for just illusory pleasures (9.586d2).

The possibility that the θυμοειδές can look for its aims without the advice of reason is also illustrated in the description of the timocratic ruler, whose soul is governed by the desire for honour. He bases his claim to rule on his exploits in war and the preparations that he makes for it (5.47d4-548a3), i.e. just on honour and victory,<sup>258</sup> and actually rejects the advice of reason.<sup>259</sup>

#### 2.2.1.2. The corruption of the θυμοειδές by the appetitive part

Once the θυμοειδές is out of the control of reason, it can easily be corrupted by the appetitive part, which finally enfeebles it and makes it work for the aims of the appetites. This is clearly shown in the case of the timocratic man, within whom, although he values honour and fame above everything else, appetites evolve secretly and open the way for his psychological transformation into an oligarchic man dominated by his necessary appetites, particularly by the appetite for wealth.<sup>260</sup>

In this way the ἐπιθυμητικόν can finally subject the θυμοειδές and govern the soul and, as a consequence, the ‘spirited’ part will lose its own ambition for honour and victory and become weak and feeble:

τρυφή δὲ καὶ μαλθακία οὐκ ἐπὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ τούτου χαλάσει τε καὶ ἀνέσει ψέγεται, ὅταν ἐν αὐτῷ δειλίαν ἐμποιῇ; [...] κολακεία δὲ καὶ

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<sup>258</sup> Victory, honour and courage are the criteria of what is the best for the lover of honour (9.582e4-5).

<sup>259</sup> The rejection by timocratic for men of knowledge and culture is underlined: they fear to admit wise men (8.547e1); they have been educated by force –not by persuasion– and value physical training over philosophy and discussion (8.548b7-c2). The lover of honour in general is said that to regard the pleasure that comes from money as vulgar and low, and again that of learning, save insofar as the knowledge confers honour, as nothing at all (9.581d5-9).

<sup>260</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3.2.1. The secret growth of the desire for wealth in the timocratic man**, pp. 143 ff..

ἀνελευθερία οὐχ ὅταν τις τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο, τὸ θυμοειδές, ὑπὸ τῷ ὀχλώδει θηρίῳ ποιῇ καὶ ἔνεκα χρημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἀπληστίας προπηλακίζομενον ἐθίζῃ ἐκ νέου ἀντὶ λέοντος πίθηκον γίγνεσθαι.<sup>261</sup>

The two stages of the corruption of the ‘spirited’ part -over-development of its wildness and later its weakening-, when it is not guided by reason, can be understood as follows: when the θυμοειδές is not appropriately trained through habituation in enduring and resisting the right things, the aggressiveness and self-assertiveness of the ‘spirited’ part can be directed to wrong goals (for example, aggression against one’s own fellow-citizens (2.375b9-c4)). In this case the person is savage and stubborn but not brave (since real bravery includes enduring and fighting when it is right to do so, i.e. according to reason’s right beliefs as a minimum or reason’s knowledge of the real good and the truth as a maximum).<sup>262</sup> But, at the same time, if the θυμοειδές has not been rightly trained to resist the ‘pull’ of the appetites according to reason’s advice, the appetites can evolve without limit and overcome the soul, i.e. finally have the soul and its other parts at their service.

### 2.2.1.3. Irrationality of the ‘spirited’ part

Insofar as the θυμοειδές goes for its goals without calculation -even when it is guided by reason-, it acts like the ἐπιθυμητικόν, in a beast-like way (ὥσπερ

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<sup>261</sup> “And luxury and timidity? Aren’t they the vices arising out of atrophy and slackness of this same element [i.e. the lion-like or snake-like], introducing cowardice into it? ... Aren’t flattery and meanness of spirit the result of subjecting this same spirited element to the mob-like beast? In their desire for money and the constant satisfaction of the beast’s needs, don’t people allow the spirited element to get used to being trampled on, right from their childhood, so that it turns into a monkey instead of a lion?” (590b3-9).

<sup>262</sup> See **Chapter 2, Section II, 2.2.2. The θυμοειδές orientated by reason: ἀνδρεία**, pp. 157 ff.

θηρίον, 3.411e1) and is, hence, irrational -ἀλογιστόν- like the appetitive part, and unlike reason (4.441a5-6). Besides it is also irrational like the appetitive part in the sense that, without correct training, the ‘spirited’ part can develop beyond appropriate limits and turn into irritability and blind stubbornness in getting its aims (victory and honour):

οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸ ἀκολασταίνειν οἶει διὰ τοιαῦτα πάλαι ψέγεσθαι, ὅτι ἀνίεται ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ τὸ δεινόν, τὸ μέγα ἐκεῖνο καὶ πολυειδὲς θρέμμα, πέρα τοῦ δέοντος; [...] ἡ δ’ αὐθάδεια καὶ δυσκολία ψέγεται οὐχ ὅταν τὸ λεοντῶδες τε καὶ ὄφεῶδες αὕξηται καὶ συντείνηται ἀναρμόστως;<sup>263</sup>

However they are irrational in a different way and to a different degree: while the θυμοειδές, if rightly habituated, can go for its objects of desire -victory and honour- as a helper of reason’s calculations in its search for the truth and the real good, the ἐπιθυμητικόν, even when it has been trained within appropriate limits, never goes in the same direction as reason but *always* drags the soul into the course of its appetites. Moreover, as we have seen above, the enlargement of the irrationality of the θυμοειδές opens the way to an increase of the irrationality and unlimited tendencies of the appetites. The over-development of the ‘spirited’ part as pure savagery and violence is connected with the fact that, if the θυμοειδές has not been correctly educated, it will no longer be a helper towards what reason determines as what is good and bad. Reason’s ‘advice’ will in the best case involve the resistance of the ‘spirited’ part to the pull of appetites. If the θυμοειδές does not fight against the appetites, this makes the appetites stronger

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<sup>263</sup> “And do you think the reason why lack of discipline has always been regarded as a fault is that it gives that terrible creature, the great beast with many heads [i.e. the ἐπιθυμητικόν], too much freedom? [...] And the vices we call obstinacy and bad temper –aren’t they caused by the lion-like or snake-like part straining or waxing beyond measure?” (9.590a5-b1).



and allows their infinite multiplication and finally weakens the ‘spirited’ part, so that the ἐπιθυμητικόν conquers the soul. So the appetitive and ‘spirited’ part are both irrational but in different ways.

The ἐπιθυμητικόν, for its part, always tends to seek the unlimited satisfaction of its desires, insofar as the unnecessary appetites, and the necessary ones, when they have grown beyond their limits, try to pull the soul in their direction. Even in the best-educated man -the future philosopher-ruler and guardian of the ideal city-, in whom the “spendthrift” appetites have been suppressed and the others harmonized, the maximum rationalization of the ἐπιθυμητικόν consists only in the containment of these appetites within their appropriate limits as established by the λογιστικόν. In this way his appetites play an essential role for keeping him alive (for example, the desire for food is necessary and good for the agent’s life and health). However, they are never active helpers of reason in the attainment of its own aims (the truth, the real good) in the sense that they never pull the soul in reason’s direction.

But if the θυμοειδές has been developed through a suitable gymnastic regime and rightly trained, and the rational part has received a good musical education that provides the λογιστικόν with appropriate harmonies and right beliefs about what is honourable and what is not, what is worth fighting for and what is not, what is to be feared and what is not,<sup>264</sup> the θυμοειδές can be an active helper of reason and contribute with its strength to the λογιστικόν’s achievement of its goals: the individual good and the political good in the context of an understanding of reality as a whole as founded on the Good. This leads us to refer to the second possibility for the θυμοειδές -i.e. striving for its goal, victory and

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<sup>264</sup> See below in **Chapter 2, Section III, 1. Primary education, 1.2. Education of the love of wisdom through μουσική: acquisition of familiarity with the beautiful and the good**, pp. 204 ff..

fame, orientated by reason-, which is related, as we will see, to a reformulation of the concept of ἀνδρεία.

### 2.2.2. The θυμοειδές orientated by reason: ἀνδρεία

The θυμοειδές can play a fundamental role in the attainment of the good, insofar as it can actually be trained to give its aggressive strength and desire for victory to the accomplishment of what is decided by reason as the right thing to do by reason. In other words it fights for goals established as good by reason:

ἄρ' οὖν [...] καὶ τοὺς ἔξωθεν πολεμίους τούτῳ ἂν κάλλιστα φυλαττοίτην ὑπὲρ ἀπάσης τῆς ψυχῆς τε καὶ τοῦ σώματος, τὸ μὲν βουλευόμενον, τὸ δὲ προπολεμοῦν, ἐπόμενον [δὲ] τῷ ἀρχοντι καὶ τῇ ἀνδρείᾳ ἐπιτελοῦν τὰ βουλευθέντα.<sup>265</sup>

In this sense the 'spirited' part is a neutral 'ally' of reason.<sup>266</sup>

#### 2.2.2.1. Ανδρεία as 'bravery' in fighting against the appetites

The θυμοειδές as associated with reason's desire for the real good and the truth seems to coincide with real courage, insofar as authentic ἀνδρεία is defined as the preservation by the θυμοειδές of what is to be feared and dared through pain

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<sup>265</sup> "Aren't these two elements also the best defenders, for body and soul in their entirety, against external enemies? *One makes the decisions, the other does the fighting, under the leadership of the ruling element, using its courage to put those decisions into effect?*" (4.442b5-9). See also 4.441e3-6 about how the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές together dominate the appetitive part.

<sup>266</sup> See above p. 119 ff..

and pleasures according to the declarations of reason (much as is concluded in the *Laches*)<sup>267</sup>:

καὶ ἀνδρεῖον δὴ οἶμαι τούτῳ τῷ μέρει καλοῦμεν ἓνα ἕκαστον, ὅταν αὐτοῦ τὸ θυμοειδὲς διασώζη διὰ τε λυπῶν καὶ ἡδονῶν τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων (Burnet) [or τοῦ λόγου (Shorey)] παραγγελθὲν δεινόν τε καὶ μή.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> When the *Laches* ends, there is a positive but provisional result as to what ἀνδρεία is: it is a δύναμις which is the same in all cases, and which has been provisionally defined as an ἐπιστήμη of the fearful and the hopeful and part of the ἐπιστήμη of what is *always* good and bad in which ἀρετή consists. However, in the *Republic* ἀνδρεία is not just knowledge. On one side, reason provides right beliefs about what is to be feared and dared, which are derived in the fully-developed philosopher from his knowledge of the Good. But, on the other side, bravery also requires that the θυμοειδὲς provide its strength to keep these right beliefs from early childhood and to undertake the difficult programme of studies in the higher education of the philosopher-rulers.

<sup>268</sup> “The title ‘brave’, I think, is one we give to any individual because of this part of him, when the spirited element in him, through surrounded by pleasures and pains, keeps intact the instructions given to it by reason about what is to be feared and what is not to be feared.” (4.442b11-c3)). Similarly at 4.429b8-c2 in relation to ἀνδρεία in the city: καὶ ἀνδρεία ἄρα πόλις μέρει τινὶ ἐαυτῆς ἐστὶ, διὰ τὸ ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἔχειν δύναμιν τοιαύτην ἢ διὰ παντὸς σώσει τὴν περὶ τῶν δεινῶν δόξαν, ταῦτά τε αὐτὰ εἶναι καὶ τοιαῦτα, ἃ τε καὶ οἷα ὁ νομοθέτης παρήγγελλεν ἐν τῇ παιδείᾳ. (“Bravery too, then, belongs to a city by virtue of a part of itself owing to its possession in that part of a quality that under all conditions will preserve the conviction that things to be feared are precisely those which and such as the lawgiver inculcated in their education.” (I follow here Shorey’s translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith’s translation.) ‘Ανδρεία means not only ‘bravery, courage’ but also ‘manliness’ so that women appear to be excluded. However, the admission of women philosopher-rulers in Plato’s ideal city also suggests a transformation of ἀνδρεία, so that it no longer connotes only ‘manliness’ (on this point see Hobbs (2000), pp. 13, 21, 374, 96-8, 244-8).

So the primary sense of ἀνδρεία seems to be the orientation of the θυμοειδές' strength towards the preservation of what reason has determined as what is to be feared and dared. The way in which the 'spirited' part preserves the right opinions of reason would be a training of the θυμοειδές in habits that fit with what reason establishes as what is to be feared and dared. The θυμοειδές' right provision of its assertiveness and desire for victory in each case would contribute to giving firmness to reason's right beliefs on this point and, in consequence, to the acquisition of real bravery. The θυμοειδές' maintenance of correct beliefs about what is to be feared and what is not includes protecting them against the pulls of the appetites, which, 'dragging' the soul in the direction of the bodily pleasures and away from the pains, are the greatest corrupters of these correct beliefs.<sup>269</sup> This means that the 'spirited' part, by being trained to resist when the appetites drag the soul in the direction of the bodily pleasures, will contribute to preserve *reason's* right beliefs and calculations.

Thus the θυμοειδές can be described fundamentally as the part of the soul that can either be independent from reason and weakened by the appetites, as we have seen above, or fight on the side of the soul against its 'internal' enemies -the appetites-, in the shape of moral indignation.<sup>270</sup> In this way Plato extends ἀνδρεία -usually understood as fearlessness in relation to fighting in war- to the condition of the soul that makes it fight against the appetites on the side of reason's desire for the good and truth, so that bravery in battle actually comes to

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<sup>269</sup> See 3.413c7-d5 where it is said that the guardians will be tested for their capacity for keeping their right beliefs without forgetting them or being deceived in spite of fear or attraction for pleasure, especially the belief that they have to do what is best for the state. See also 430a1-b5 and 502e2-503a7.

<sup>270</sup> As shown above (**Chapter 2, Section I, 1.2. The deduction of the θυμοειδές from...**, pp. 119 ff.), the possible coalition of the θυμοειδές with the λογιστικόν against the appetitive part can take different forms and have different results.

be a secondary expression of courage. This ‘external’ expression of bravery is also restricted by what is good for the city<sup>271</sup> (which only reason can establish).

### 2.2.2.2. The highest expression of ἀνδρεία: philosophical courage

In the earlier childhood of the guardian the θυμοειδές supports reason’s true beliefs about what has to be feared and dared –what we have described as the primary sense of ἀνδρεία on p.157. But these are right beliefs without grounds, insofar as the foundations of these beliefs have not been acquired, at least not yet. The highest expression of courage is in fact to direct the θυμοειδές’ strength to reason’s search for dialectical knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the individual and the political good as a whole in the light of the Good of reality in general, which is the aim of the future philosopher-rulers’ training in mathematics and dialectic.<sup>272</sup> This

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<sup>271</sup> See 2.375b9-c4 and 6.503a. In fact this ‘right’ bravery implies that on some occasions the appropriate thing may be not to face the enemy but actually to evade him, as was already established at *Lach.* 190e-191c.

<sup>272</sup> The contrast that Plato establishes between philosophers and sophists can also be understood in the light of a desire for victory orientated by reason and its desire for the truth. At *Gorg.* 457d Socrates establishes an opposition between those (the sophists) who take part in the dialogue only moved by their desire for victory –the φιλονικούντας- and those who are always orientated in the dialogue by their desire to investigate the subject that is discussed (ζητούντας τὸ προκείμενον ἐν τῷ λόγῳ). For Socrates the only real victory is to know the truth (505e-506a). In relation to this point in the *Gorgias* see Vigo (2001). Bravery in the search for the truth also appears in the *Laches*. At 194a1, after Laches has researched on what ἀνδρεία is and has finally but reluctantly defined it as “a wise endurance of the soul”, Socrates says that, although they have arrived at a new aporetic point, in the definition of courage that they have attained there is something true that can be applied to philosophical research:

“S.-But are you willing that we should agree with our statement to a certain extent?

L.-To what extent and to what statement?

S.-With the one that commands us to endure. If you are willing, let us hold our ground in the search and let us endure, so that courage itself won’t make fun of *us for not searching for it*

can be considered as Plato's utmost point of transformation of the concept of bravery.<sup>273</sup> The search for truth of the real philosopher is a *fight* for knowing what it is (πρὸς τὸ ὄν πεφυκὼς εἶη ἀμιλλᾶσθαι ὃ γε ὄντως φιλομαθής, 6.490a8-9)<sup>274</sup> and for this reason philosophical natures cannot be cowardly and slave-like.<sup>275</sup> After the θυμοειδές has been developed as the ally of reason in early childhood through physical training and moderated through reason's musical education,<sup>276</sup> in higher education the philosophical character is trained and examined in all branches of knowledge to prove its intellectual courage (εἰ καὶ τὰ μέγιστα μαθήματα δυνατὴ ἔσται ἐνεγκεῖν εἴτε καὶ ἀποδειλιάσει, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀποδειλιῶντες, 6.503e3-504a1).<sup>277</sup> This strength for fighting to know the truth provided by the θυμοειδές is a fundamental prerequisite, together with the development of reason, for the fulfilment of the ambitious programme of higher education for the philosophers (6.503d7-9). But, at the same time, when the dialectician attains the knowledge of the real good and understands the individual and the political good as a whole in the light of the Good of reality in general, this implies that he *knows* (rather than just having right beliefs) about what is to be feared and what is not. In this way ἀνδρεία in its full sense is only attained with *knowledge*. The portrait of Socrates that we find in the *Euthyphro*, *Crito*, *Apology* and *Phaedo*, in spite of the different subjects and approaches of these dialogues, reveals him as a character in

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*courageously -if endurance should perhaps be courage after all.*" (I follow here Kent Sprage's translation in Cooper (ed.) (1997)).

In this sense Socrates, who shows in his acts this wise endurance in which the philosophical bravery of searching for the truth consists, is the best example of bravery.

<sup>273</sup> In relation to this point see Hobbs (2000), pp. 239-240.

<sup>274</sup> "...the nature of the true lover of learning [is] to keep struggling towards what it is ..."

<sup>275</sup> 6.486b3-4. See also 6.490c10 and 6.494b2 in relation to ἀνδρεία as a requirement of the real philosophical nature.

<sup>276</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, .4. The education of the θυμοειδές**, pp. 167 ff..

<sup>277</sup> "...if it will be capable of enduring the most demanding ones, or if it is an intellectual coward, the way some people are physical cowards."

which ἀνδρεία has achieved its maximum development, insofar as he faces death without fear in defense of his passion for the truth,<sup>278</sup> which is the passion that has led his whole life and that ideally might lead the life of every man.

As a consequence, when the desire for victory of the ‘spirited’ part is led by reason to what really is to be dared and what is not, the desire for honour of the θυμοειδής is also directed by reason only to truly honourable things (for example, the studies that make him wise, self-disciplined and just (9.591c)). When the wise man is governed by reason, he accepts and welcomes only the honours that make him a better human being and rejects those honours that can damage his soul (9.592a; see also 9.586d-587a). In other words, when the ‘spirited’ part is governed by reason, it seeks the acquisition of authentic honours alone, i.e. honours received as a result of fighting against external and, above all, internal enemies –i.e. the appetites within the soul. These are the kind of honours that men of the ideal city and gods only grant to the philosophers, i.e. “brave” searchers for the truth.<sup>279</sup> Therefore the ‘spirited’ part of the soul is fully developed only when it seeks what is really honourable and worth fighting for. Otherwise it goes for inauthentic honours and victory and does not really fight for what it should ultimately fight for, being corrupted by τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν.

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<sup>278</sup> Socrates is the utmost example of ἀνδρεία because he bravely faces death and accepts death for not giving up his engagement with the search for the truth (Socrates, as *dramatis persona*, in the four dialogues mentioned above “embraces death as the only way to achieve his identity of Athenian *polis* citizen and of philosopher concerned about the quest of the truth.” (See Juliá (2001), p.21). In Alcibiades’ speech in the *Symposium* Socrates is also presented as truly ἀνδρεῖος (219d3-221c1).

<sup>279</sup> On the honours for the guardians see 5.460b1, 5.468b2 10.612b7-c3. On the honours for the philosopher-rulers after their death, see 7.540b (commented on Hobbs (2000), p. 234. and p. 238).

### 2.3.Cognitive capacity required by the θυμοειδές.<sup>280</sup>

Similarly to what we have seen in relation to the appetitive part, insofar as the tripartite division of the soul present in Book 4 and kept in Books 8 and 9 is made from the point of view of the main current of desires of the soul, there is no specific treatment of the cognitive capacities required by the θυμοειδές. However, it is possible in this case too to speculate on the point, taking into account the cognitive functions that are clearly attributed to the λογιστικόν.

#### 2.3.1. Beliefs on what is to be feared and dared as provided by reason (2.375e1-376c5)

The example of the well-bred dog at 2.375e1-376c5 gives us good reason to think that right or wrong beliefs about what is to be feared or not, to be honoured or not are *always* provided by the λογιστικόν, which is the aspect of us that reasons, argues, etc. (see below 2.3. The λογιστικόν pp. 173 ff.), and comprehends rightly or wrongly what the good is.

In order to be brave, the guardians, like dogs, should be naturally (φύσει) spirited, energetic (καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς, ὅτι γε θυμοειδῆ, 2.375b7<sup>281</sup>) and should have acute senses, speed and strength in order to be able to fight (οἷον ὁξύν τέ που δεῖ αὐτοῖν ἐκάτερον εἶναι πρὸς αἴσθησιν καὶ ἐλαφρόν πρὸς τὸ αἰσθανόμενον διωκᾶσθαι, καὶ ἰσχυρόν αὖ, ἐὰν δέη ἐλόντα διαμάχεσθαι, 375a5-7<sup>282</sup>). But, as in the case of a well-bred dog, their ‘spirited’ part should be mixed with love of wisdom so that they behave in the following way:

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<sup>280</sup> For further development of what is treated here see below **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement**, pp. 180 ff..

<sup>281</sup> “And the mental requirement is that he should be spirited, or energetic.”

<sup>282</sup> “Well, for example, each of them needs acute senses, speed in pursuit of what they detect, and strength as well, in case they catch it and have to fight with it.”



ὅτι ὃν μὲν ἂν ἴδῃ ἀγνώτα, χαλεπαίνει, οὐδὲ ἐν κακὸν προπεπονηώς·  
 ὃν δ' ἂν γνώριμον, ἀσπάζεται, κἂν μηδὲν πώποτε ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὸν  
 πεπόνθη.<sup>283</sup>

The aspect that χαλεπαίνει is the 'spirited' part (see for example, 4.440c7-d3). But what recognizes (ἴδῃ) the unknown (ἀγνώτα) and the known (γνώριμον) and so discriminates (ὀριζόμενον) the familiar (τὸ οἰκεῖον) and the unfamiliar (τὸ ἀλλότριον) according to intelligence (σύνεσις) and ignorance (ἄγνοια) is the aspect of us related to love of wisdom (2.376b3-6).<sup>284</sup> This natural disposition of reason is developed so that the familiar and known is the beautiful and the good (3.400d11-402a4), while the θυμοειδὲς accompanies and supports -helps- reason's commitments, insofar as it is developed through physical training and taught through habituation to fight and resist in the right way. This paves the way for the λογιστικόν's operation on its own and its governing over the soul, so that, if the person is able to undertake the programme of higher education and become a dialectician, his rational part may attain a correct comprehension of what is truly good for each part of the soul and for the soul as a whole (4.442c5-8) -allowing each part to get its own pleasure- and for society in the light of the Good.

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<sup>283</sup> "When it sees someone it doesn't know, a dog turns nasty, even though it hasn't been badly treated by him in the past. When it sees someone familiar, it welcomes him, even if it has never been at all well treated by him" (2.376a5-7).

<sup>284</sup> This suggests that for Plato animals have some kind of rationality, although they do not have reason (λογισμός, λόγος, λογιστικόν) like human beings in the sense that they cannot properly reflect and calculate. On this point see n. 203 above and Sorabji (1993), p.10.

### 2.3.2. The influence of the ‘spirited’ part on reason’s understanding

But where the ‘spirited’ part is not appropriately trained to work as a helper of reason<sup>285</sup> and, besides, the love of wisdom of the rational part has not been appropriately cultivated, this situation has epistemological consequences for reason’s performance. This is the case of the timocratic man, in whom rational capacity and love of wisdom are often not developed through the right musical education and, at the same time, the ‘spirited’ part is highly stimulated and increased but not correctly trained according to reason’s prescriptions. Because of this psychological configuration, the rational part of the timocratic man cannot work on its own in order to establish what is good and bad, true and false and begins to consider fighting and winning as ends themselves, so acquiring a distorted understanding of reality as a whole. Secondly, reason, not being trained to consider the things by themselves on its own, can easily make false judgements since it is more in contact with the changeable and the appearances. This includes judgments and opinions about what is honourable and what is not. So the misconception about what is honourable belongs to reason, although it is a consequence of the domination of the desires of the θυμοειδές in the soul and, in that sense, it can be said that it belongs to the ‘spirited’ part. In consequence, the fact that the θυμοειδές is orientated at least by beliefs (ideally by right beliefs in early childhood and later by right beliefs with foundation, i.e. knowledge) does not mean that it is in some way rational.<sup>286</sup> In this intellectual procedure the θυμοειδές merely collaborates with its strength through a right process of

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<sup>285</sup> Some interpreters (see Robinson (1995) p. 44) say that the θυμοειδές is considered *exclusively* as a helper of reason (see 4.440a8-b8). But the passage 4.440a5-6 clearly says that “sometimes” (ἐνίοτε) the high spirited part fights against the appetites, not always: ὁ λόγος σημαίνει τὴν ὀργὴν πολεμεῖν ἐνίοτε ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις ὡς ἄλλο ὄν ἄλλω.

<sup>286</sup> Differently, Hobbs makes the distinction between beliefs that belong to the ‘spirited’ part and rational beliefs based on reasoning about what is good as a whole that come from reason (Hobbs (2000), pp. 21-23). Similarly to her Moline says that the θυμοειδές as well as the ἐπιθυμητικόν have “a minimal level of ‘cognitive’ capacity” (Moline (1978), p. 11) so that they can ‘argue’ with the rational part.

habituation, to maintain the right beliefs (or later with the attainment of the dialectical knowledge), but the beliefs belong to reason.<sup>287</sup> When the θυμοειδής rejects the government and advice of reason, as in the case of the person governed by the appetitive part, the honour-loving part also constrains the λογιστικόν and the rational part cannot go after its own real and proper pleasure -the pleasure of knowing the truth- but has to address itself to illusory pleasures that are alien to it. The result is that the rational part, which naturally desires the truth and what is truly good, misunderstands what the good is and, in consequence, the ‘spirited’ part, as well as the other two parts, fails to find its own pleasure.

### 2.3.3. Capacity of discrimination required by the ‘spirited’ part

So, as in the case of the appetitive part, the θυμοειδής only seems to require a minimum cognitive capacity of discrimination in order to recognize what to attack or fight for and what not, just as, to use Plato’s own comparison, a dog learns to discriminate between enemies and friends. In both cases aggressiveness and self-assertiveness are educated in a stimulus-reaction way, which makes the reaction similar to an instinct, a physiological response. The λόγος that establishes who is enemy and who is friend comes from outside. In the case of the dog its trainer instructs the dog as to what/who has to be welcomed and considered as “friendly”, but there is no possibility that the dog will ever get a comprehension of the principles involved; by contrast the human being is trained, when a child, in the right pattern of response and at the same time starts to acquire right or wrong beliefs that provide the *understanding* of what is to be feared and dared, in other words to identify appropriate targets for his aggressive or self-assertive reactions. The young guardians acquire right beliefs in this respect and, if they finally become dialecticians, will acquire a full comprehension and knowledge of them. In the case of the unjust man, reason is feeble and a servant of aims that belong to

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<sup>287</sup> Similarly Hobbs (2000), p. 237. But she seems wrongly to consider that these wrong evaluations are made by the θυμοειδής (see n. 286 above).

either of the other two parts that are alien to reason. In this case the rational part calculates and reflects according to inappropriate goals; it also produces wrong judgements and acquires wrong beliefs because either of these parts connects the soul with what is changeable. In this way the λογιστικόν becomes weakened, not being nourished with right beliefs and knowledge and is exposed to a final destruction of its own capacity for right calculation but above all of knowing the truth and the real good that it in its essence desires.<sup>288</sup>

## 2.4. The education of the θυμοειδές

### 2.4.1. Appropriate education

The alliance of the θυμοειδές with reason and reason's desire for the truth and the good (as well as how successful this alliance is if it takes place) depends on agents not receiving the wrong education.<sup>289</sup>

...οὕτως καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ τρίτον τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ θυμοειδές, ἐπίκουρον ὄν τῷ λογιστικῷ φύσει, ἐὰν μὴ ὑπὸ κακῆς τροφῆς διαφθαρή.<sup>290</sup>

#### 2.4.1.1 Development and habituation of the 'spirited' part

Insofar as the θυμοειδές is developed as such mainly through physical training and hunting (3.410b3-9; 8.549a4-7), it seems to be the psychic dimension of

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<sup>288</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3.2.** τῶν φάσεων τι ἐν ἡμῖν, pp. 186 ff.. Thus, using Aristotelian terms, in these cases reason might achieve δεινότης (cleverness without virtue, *EN* 1144a23) but without achieving φρόνησις (in which intelligence presupposes virtue).

<sup>289</sup> Similarly Robinson (1995), pp. 44-45.

<sup>290</sup> "Does the soul also contain this third, spirited element, which is auxiliary of the rational element by nature, provided it is not corrupted by a poor upbringing?" (4. 441a2-3).

certain physiological states. But the ‘spirited’ part has to be not only developed but rightly orientated.

As in the case of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, this orientation basically consists in a training, so that the habit of running certain risks is developed and stimulated and coward or falsely-brave tendencies are suppressed and become atrophied. For example, the young guardians are taken to be spectators of war in order to encourage the “taste of blood” in them (7.537a4-6), so that their θυμός is trained in the habit of reacting positively if the risk of death must be faced, and the natural fear of death in this way becomes atrophied in them.

#### **2.4.1.2. Interaction with the education of the other two parts**

The education of the ‘spirited’ part is in interaction with the education of the other two parts.

In the musical education<sup>291</sup> through which the love of wisdom of the young guardian’s rational part is educated (3.411c9-d5), he acquires right beliefs that fit with the courageous habits that he develops. For example, the story-tellers must not give a completely negative image of Hades in their tales (3.386a6-387b5) so that the future guardians will not fear death. In this way, the habits acquired by the ‘spirited’ part -in this case training for going through risky situations without fearing death- are accompanied by the learning of right beliefs, such as considering death as something that must be confronted when necessary.

Other aspects of musical education, although mainly directed at developing the love of wisdom that belongs to the rational part, also have influence on the training of the ‘spirited’ part (as well of the appetitive part, as we saw before). In the telling of stories, only either pure narration or, as a second best, imitation of

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<sup>291</sup> See below **Chapter 2, Section III, 1. Primary education**, pp. 204 ff.

“people who are *brave*, self-disciplined, god-fearing, free” (3.395c4-5), are admitted so that the young guardians learn to copy these models of behaviour. Rhythms like the Dorian and Phrygian, rhythms which reproduce in their musical structure how the prudent and the brave talk and the patterns of a courageous life (3.399b6; c3), also work as a sort of paradigm of behaviour to be reproduced by the guardians, and one that trains their ‘spirited’ part. The programme of higher education leading to expertise in dialectic and finally the knowledge of the Good also contributes to a further reinforcement of the ‘spirited’ part insofar as its strength is required for going through this difficult programme 7.535a9-b1. At the same time knowledge of the Good, and with it of what is good for the individual and for society, also allows the development of the virtue of ἀνδρεία as the most authentic expression of the θυμοειδής.<sup>292</sup> At the same time there is an appropriate habituation of the appetites within the right limits, and this also favours the ‘spirited’ part’s ‘fight’ against them and keeping its position in spite of their pull in an opposite direction to reason.

In fact part of the earlier education of the guardians is planned to make the three parts interact in such a way that the fundamental form of ἀνδρεία, already explained above, can arise in them, i.e. with the ‘spirited’ part resisting the pull of the appetites and so keeping intact the instructions of reason about what is to be feared and dared (4.442b11-c3). The guardians to be that are selected at the end of the programme of earlier education are the ones who have been able to keep their right beliefs unchanged by pleasure, pain and fear (4.430a1-b5), insofar as the avoidance of suffering or of a painful situation or the attainment of a pleasant situation is one of the reasons why someone can “unwillingly” (ἀκούσῃως) lose their right opinions (the other two reasons are persuasion and forgetfulness, 3.412e10-c3). Thus they must be trained to resist these temptations and later on tested in, and selected according to, their resistance, the test and selection obliging

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<sup>292</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section II, 2.2.2. The θυμοειδής orientated by reason: ἀνδρεία**, pp. 157 ff. and Hobbs (2000), p. 243.

them to pass through fearful situations and also tempting pleasures (3.413c5-e5). Their success in this aspect obviously depends on a right training of the 'spirited' part, to prevent their being frightened about death or enduring cold, hunger, etc. if necessary, so that this part helps to keep the appetites within appropriate limits and so easily accompany reason's right opinion about what is the right thing to do.

#### 2.4.2. Inappropriate education

As for the wrong education of the 'spirited' part, two situations are possible. One possible situation, as for example in the case of the timocratic man, is that the θυμοειδής is developed through activities such as physical training, war activities, hunting (8.549a5-7; 8.547d4-548a3) but without being specifically trained to fight against the real external and internal enemies (i.e. the enemies of the city and the 'pull' of the appetites); at the same time the rational part is wrongly or poorly developed (as in the case of the timocratic man 8.548e4-549a7) and the appetites are not trained to keep within appropriate limits (8.548a5-c2.; 549a9-b4). In this first case the person is wild and savage (9.590a9-b1; 3.411c4-e2; 3.4103-5). The second possible situation has examples in the oligarchic man, democratic man and tyrant. In this second case the 'spirited' part is scarcely developed in itself, there is no musical education for the rational part and the appetites are not trained to keep within the limit of necessity.<sup>293</sup> The person becomes a coward (8.554e7-b6). The hidden overdevelopment of the appetites in the timocratic man makes him psychologically unstable so that he can potentially become a lover of wealth.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3. Education of the appetites**, pp. 139 ff..

<sup>294</sup> At 8.549c-550b the wrong beliefs of the young timocratic man are presented as provided by the most influential figures of his social environment who are not governed by the λογιστικόν and so have a wrong conception of what is good (his mother and the slaves advise him to be ἀνδρείος by acquiring wealth; his father is governed by the λογιστικόν but has no influence because he is socially isolated). See also Hobbs (2000), pp. 28-29. In other words Plato understands that the

## 2.5. Conclusion

Therefore, in short, this impulse of assertiveness that struggles in its fight for victory and fame can develop in two different ways. Without reason's direction -as in the case of the lover of honour- it becomes pure savagery, being finally corrupted and weakened by the appetites (so that its possessor becomes a lover of wealth). Conversely, with reason's orientation and an appropriate training, it comes to be a fundamental ally of reason's desire for the truth and the good, insofar as it contributes with its strength, through appropriate taming, to the performance of reason's instructions. The primary manifestation of this alliance and submission of the θυμοειδής to reason is ἀνδρεία, where this is a matter of supporting the right beliefs, i.e. the beliefs in the young guardians about what is to be feared and dared, insofar as the 'spirited' part, being trained to run appropriate risks and fight for and against appropriate friends and enemies, supports with its vigorous performance the right beliefs of reason. From this fundamental form of bravery other expressions of ἀνδρεία are derived. Courage to face external enemies in the battle is not the only one of these manifestations; in fact, the fundamental expression of bravery is the θυμοειδής' battle against the appetites on the side of reason within the soul. Ανδρεία is also required for the performance of the programme of higher education of the philosopher rulers. In fact the man who is brave in the utmost and full sense is the one who has had the courage to go through the higher education programme and looks for the knowledge of the Good that includes knowledge of what is to be feared and dared, insofar as this has its foundations on the Good of reality in general as discoverable by the dialectician.

So, if we now come back to the hydraulic image of the soul, we can see that when the wisdom-loving aspect of us gains the alliance of the 'spirited' part through a

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intellectual make-up of an individual does not emerge *ex nihilo* but from the society where he/she grows up.



right process of education, in which the habituation of the ‘spirited’ part is combined with reason’s acquisition of good harmonies and right beliefs about what is to be feared and dared and what is not, the rational part gets the strength of the desire for victory that is proper to the θυμοειδές, which helps to balance the strong stream of the desires of the appetitive part. But if the θυμοειδές seeks for its goals independently of reason and is not trained to endure when necessary against the ‘pull’ of the appetites, its force is easily weakened by the stream of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and parted from reason’s desire for the truth and the real good.

### 3. The λογιστικόν

#### 3.1. The leading desire of the rational part: desire for the truth

The λογιστικόν is that with which we learn (μανθάνομεν),<sup>295</sup> reason (ὃ λογίζεται)<sup>296</sup> and judge (See 9.582d7<sup>297</sup>). Insofar as the λογιστικόν is guided by the desire for knowledge, wisdom or truth, a desire which is an integral part of it,<sup>298</sup> these activities of reasoning, learning, arguing and so on (which we usually call ‘intellectual activities’) are developed by the λογιστικόν in order to attain its object of desire, i.e. the truth. In this way, the conflict that may occur in the soul is *between ‘leading’ desires*, mainly between the passion for truth (and the real good) of the λογιστικόν and the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and/or the love for honour and victory of the θυμοειδές (when the latter is not an ally of the λογιστικόν).<sup>299</sup> The fact that the intellectual activities of the λογιστικόν are governed by its passion creates an unusual situation in the light of our philosophical tradition, in which reason has tended in general to be seen as

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<sup>295</sup> ὃ μανθάνει ἄνθρωπος 9.580d10; ὃ γε μανθάνομεν 9.581b5; ἐν ᾧ φρονεῖν ἐγγίγνεται 9.572a6.

<sup>296</sup> 4.439d5.

<sup>297</sup> ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ δι’ οὗ γε δεῖ ὄργανον κρίνεσθαι [...] τοῦτο ὄργανον [...] τοῦ φιλοσόφου. (“And the instrument with which judgement should be made [...] belong[s] ... to the lover of truth.”) The λόγοι are the ὄργανον which the philosopher uses to judge (see 9.582d11-13). These arguments have to be produced by reason, which is the part of the soul that governs the philosopher.

<sup>298</sup> At 4.435e7 and 4.436e9 this part of us is characterized as “what loves learning” (τὸ φιλομαθές 4.436e9). See also 9.581b5-10: ἀλλὰ μὴν ὃ γε μανθάνομεν, παντὶ δῆλον ὅτι πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὅπη ἔχει πᾶν ἀεὶ τέταται [...]. φιλομαθές δὴ καὶ φιλόσοφον καλοῦντες αὐτὸ κατὰ τρόπον ἂν καλοῖμεν; (“And of course it’s obvious to anyone that the part we learn with is entirely and constantly intent upon knowing where the truth lies [...]. Would it be in order, then, for us to call it a lover of learning and a lover of wisdom?”).

<sup>299</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I, 1.2. The deduction of the θυμοειδές from ...**, pp. 119 ff..

divorced from and often opposed to desire.<sup>300</sup> However, this creates at the same time a problem about the relationship between rational desire and reason's intellectual activities. Plato does not say too much about it. What can fairly be inferred from the leading role of desire for the truth is that this passion constitutes rationality in the sense that all the intellectual activities -judging, reasoning, calculating- are motivated by this desire and in this sense based on it.<sup>301</sup> This relationship is shown in the fact that the dialectical knowledge based on the Good is at the same time the maximum development of reason's capacity and of its passion for the truth.

The λογιστικόν (like the other two parts) is common to all human beings, which means that the desire for knowledge exists in all of us (as do appetites and desire for victory and honour).<sup>302</sup> But this part has the peculiarity of making us

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<sup>300</sup> For Cooper (1999), p. 189 this division between, on one hand, beliefs that come from reason and provide information for action but not motivation and, on the other hand, desire or desires that provide motivation and impulse for action is a familiar modern theory that goes back to Hobbes. Kahn (1987), pp.78-81 traces back this theory to Aristotle, who divides the faculties of the soul into reason and desire (δρεξις), which is further subdivided into βούλησις, θυμός and ἐπιθυμία. Cooper (1999) p. 190 claims that, in opposition to this tradition, for Plato there are desires of reason, which are "strong impulses of some kind which we experience simply and directly because we possess the power of reason". Similarly, though in more extreme form, Kahn (1987), p. 80: "[in the *Republic*] reason appears not as some distinct principle [from desire] but as *a particular form of desire*" (Kahn's italics). This line of interpretation had already been held by Nettleship (1963) [1898], p. 158 (cited by Guthrie (1975), p. 476). Differently from these interpreters and from my own proposal, Parry thinks that while in the *Republic* Plato makes "reason the ruler that establishes virtue in the soul by forcing or guiding the desire", in the *Symposium* he makes "desire the chief underlying force in the activity" (Parry (1996), p. 215).

<sup>301</sup> In this way for Plato human reason is "the synergetic union of the power to know and the power to love" (Nakhnikian (1978), p. 287). Similarly Moravcsik (1971) understands the erotic ascent of the *Symposium* as a process where philosophical ἔρωξ "pushes the mind to new investigations" and "keeps the mind restless" (p. 292) about finally achieving contemplation of the Form of Beauty (pp. 294-295).

<sup>302</sup> Cooper (1999), p. 190.

human beings. In Book 9 this is symbolized by the image of the soul, representing the λογιστικόν in the form of a small man (9.588d). It is in this sense that, although the self or the person is the whole soul with all these parts,<sup>303</sup> the rational part of the soul represents what we more authentically are.<sup>304</sup> The fact that this part receives more or less development in each human being has the effect of making some men 'more human' than others; and the human being in whom rationality is fully developed can even become a god-like creature (9.589d1; 9.590d1). The life of a human being can be directed by other kinds of ἔρως (the love of honour in the case of the φιλόνικον or the φιλοκερδές (9.581c4) or the love of wealth of the appetitive part). The development of our human and potentially god-like nature depends on our life being led by the ἔρως for the truth of the λογιστικόν. The consequence of this is that the passion for wisdom is, between other possible leading passions, the most authentic expression of what we are.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> This is similar to the conception of the human being as a compound of soul and body in the *Phaedo*. The soul in the *Phaedo* can either try to be by itself as far as possible (see 65b-c) or address itself to the σῶμα, which connects the soul with the changeable and generates appetites and aggressiveness (66b). This represents in another light the aspects of the soul other than the rational part that appear in the *Republic*. Similarly Robinson (Robinson (1995), p. 46), although he sees a change of perspective in the *Republic* with reference to the pleasures and desires identified in the soul (see pp. 55 ff.).

<sup>304</sup> See Robinson (1970), pp. 51 ff.

<sup>305</sup> This is the reason why, although Plato develops a theory of a 'tripartite' soul in the *Republic*, he says in Book 10 that the soul in its truest nature must only be considered in relation to its love of wisdom (see on this point Guthrie (1971), pp. 232-233).

### 3.2. Desire for the truth and desire for the real good. The λογιστικόν's understanding or misunderstanding of the real good

This desire for truth converges with the desire for the real good<sup>306</sup> and, when it governs the life of an individual (as in the case of a philosopher), also makes possible the development and fulfilment of the desires of the rest of the soul in an appropriate and good way.<sup>307</sup> But how this desire for truth is connected with the universal desire for the good and how this passion leads the desires of the other parts of the soul in an appropriate way requires further explanation.

As we find in many of the so called 'Socratic' dialogues, the desire for the good is universal; that is, everybody desires what is really good. This idea is expressed in Book 6 of the *Republic*, before the introduction of the allegory of the sun, in the following way:

...ἀγαθὰ δὲ οὐδενὶ ἔτι ἀρκεῖ τὰ δοκοῦντα κτᾶσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὰ ὄντα ζητοῦσιν, τὴν δὲ δόξαν ἐνταῦθα ἤδη πᾶς ἀτιμάζει.<sup>308</sup>

But, although we all desire the good, insofar as our reason is capable of having both right and wrong conceptions what the good is, we cannot always achieve it. Thus in Book 6 of the *Republic*:

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<sup>306</sup> Similarly Kahn (1987), p. 82: "This unity of theory and practice [i.e. that is characteristic of Plato's thought] has a consequence or presupposition that the knowledge of truth must also be a knowledge of value, of what is worth pursuing, so that the desire to know the truth will ultimately be a desire to know *and possess* the good" (Kahn's italics).

<sup>307</sup> 9.586d4-587a1. See also 4.443c9-4.444a1; 9.591e1-592a6.

<sup>308</sup> "When it comes to things which are good, on the other hand, no one has ever yet been satisfied with the appearance. They want things that really *are* good; they all treat the appearance of it with contempt." (Griffith's italics) (6.505d7-9).

ὁ δὴ διώκει μὲν ἅπασα ψυχὴ καὶ τούτου ἔνεκα πάντα πράττει, ἀπομαντευομένη τι εἶναι, ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς τί ποτ' ἐστὶν οὐδὲ πίστει χρήσασθαι μονίμῳ οἷα καὶ περὶ τᾶλλα, διὰ τοῦτο δὲ ἀποτυγχάνει καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἴ τι ὄφελος ἦν, [...]. οἶμαι γοῦν ... δίκαιά τε καὶ καλὰ ἀγνοούμενα ὅπη ποτὲ ἀγαθὰ ἐστίν, οὐ πολλοῦ τιнос ἄξιον φύλακα κεκτῆσθαι ἂν ἑαυτῶν τὸν τοῦτο ἀγνοοῦντα· μαντεύομαι δὲ μηδένα αὐτὰ πρότερον γνῶσεσθαι ἱκανῶς.<sup>309</sup>

Here we find the typical assertions of Socratic ethical intellectualism: we all desire what is really good –and do everything for sake of it; but what we actually do is determined by what we think and conceive as the real good and, consequently, a man's wrong doing "is involuntary and due to ignorance",<sup>310</sup> "for he isn't wrong of his own will"<sup>311</sup>. But this Socratic intellectualism receives a more complex treatment through the theory of the tripartite soul in the *Republic*.<sup>312</sup> What I claim and try to show below, as at least a plausible interpretation of texts from the *Republic*, is that the λογιστικόν, being the small part of us through which we learn, reason, judge and can be wise<sup>313</sup> and desire the truth, is *always*<sup>314</sup> in charge

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<sup>309</sup> "This is what every soul follows. All its actions are directed at this. It has a sort of divine intuition that the good is something, but it is in doubt, unable to get a firm grasp on *what* it is, or find any firm belief of the kind it has about other things. As a result it loses whatever benefit it might have got from those other things. [...]. But if it's not known ... in what way just and beautiful things are good, and if in particular a guardian does not know this, what kind of guardian will justice and beauty have got for themselves? And I have an intuition that no one will have a satisfactory knowledge of justice and beauty without knowing this first." (6.505d11-506a3). (Griffith's italics.)

<sup>310</sup> Shorey (1946) [1935], vol. II, p. 404, note b.

<sup>311</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἐκῶν ἀμαρτάνει (9.589c6).

<sup>312</sup> Cooper (1999), p.187.

<sup>313</sup> σοφὸν δέ γε ἐκείνῳ τῷ μικρῷ μέρει (4.442c5).

of providing (rightly or wrongly) this comprehension of what is good, its understanding depending on which of the three currents of desires leads our lives.<sup>315</sup> In this way the strange situation of attributing some sort of rationality to those parts described as *ἄλογιστά* is avoided. As said above, the tripartite division of the soul is mainly made in the light of the different leading desires of the soul and only in relation to the *λογιστικόν* is there a clear and unambiguous reference to cognitive capacities as well. Besides, as shown above, the performance of the irrational parts can be explained by supposing only a minimum cognitive capacity (which need not be identified with either of these parts but would probably be a basic expression of the *λογιστικόν*).

According to this interpretation, when the *λογιστικόν* is dragged about by desires alien to its aims –e.g. when wealth or honour, which are for the other two parts ‘goods’ (8.555b8-10; 8.562b3-4; 8.553d1-7), it is deceived in its conception of the good with the result that we do not actually direct our efforts to what is really good because the rational part wrongly conceives what is changeable and

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<sup>314</sup> According to the epistemology that appears in Book 9 in relation to the distinction between true and false pleasures no cognitive capacity has to be attributed to the *ἐπιθυμητικόν*, *pace* Penner (see Penner (1971), pp. 101; 110), or to the *θυμοειδές* (Hobbs (2000), pp. 22-23). All the intellectual work is in the hands of the *λογιστικόν*, which, when it is driven by desires alien to it, is in contact with the changeable and misconceives what the good is. See below **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as organ of judgement**, pp. 180 ff..

<sup>315</sup> Similarly Cooper (1999), p. 202, n. 18 says that when reason is displaced by the *θυμοειδές* or the *ἐπιθυμητικόν*, this fact “does not mean either that reason ceases altogether to function (see 553d) or that the usurper actually begins to perform reason’s functions of calculating what to do, declaring where the overall good lies and deciding accordingly. What happens instead is simply that, yielding to the importunities of the usurping desires (i.e. accepting the strength or frequency of these desires as criterion of the value of their objects), the person’s reason comes to adopt, as its own general view of what *is* good for him, the overall plan of gratifying those desires first and foremost”.

the pleasure that the changeable provides as the truest and most real thing.<sup>316</sup> This explains why, although desire for the good is common to all human beings, those who are governed by the ἐπιθυμητικόν or the θυμοειδές do not direct their lives to the real good. For this reason ἀκρασία, which consists in the victory of the appetitive part over the rational part, as a permanent state of the soul would make the λογιστικόν be in contact with the changeable and finally misconceive what the real good is.

Only if our soul is led by the desire for the truth that belongs to the λογιστικόν, as in the case of the person who practices philosophy, can we understand correctly what the good is. In this case the λογιστικόν attempts to acquire knowledge of the Form of Good. This knowledge ultimately provides a comprehension of reality as a whole, a comprehension which also includes knowledge of the individual good and of the good of the state (i.e. a practical knowledge about how to live in individual and political terms, which Plato calls “justice”<sup>317</sup>). Insofar as this

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<sup>316</sup> Thus I agree with Penner that in the conflict of the soul between the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the λογιστικόν (and also between the θυμοειδές and the λογιστικόν -but P. considers the θυμοειδές as an aspect of the ἐπιθυμητικόν) there are two different conceptions of what it is good to do: one conception that is right and the other which is wrong (Penner (1971), pp. 97-100). But he also states that the wrong conception belongs to the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the right conception to reason. By contrast, I claim that *both* conceptions of what it is good to do belong to the λογιστικόν, as it is the aspect with which we reason. While the right conception of the good action originates exclusively from reason according to its own aims, the wrong conception about what is good to do emerges from the λογιστικόν's being dragged about by the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν (or the pure aggressiveness and desire for honour and victory of the θυμοειδές) into the sphere of the changeable. This makes the λογιστικόν misunderstand what it is good to do. In short the conflict is between desires –the desires of reason and the desires of the other two parts- but this conflict affects the epistemological condition of the person..

<sup>317</sup> ‘Justice’ means in the *Republic* that each part of the city or each part of the soul does its own job (4.443c9-e7). Only the λογιστικόν can have the wisdom to know what is good for the soul (and also for the city and for reality in general) as a whole (4.442c5-8).



knowledge of the Good is a necessary condition for access to the real good, knowledge, i.e. the proper object of desire of the λογιστικόν, is what is good for us in the first place.<sup>318</sup>

A fundamental consequence of all this is that, according to the psychology of the *Republic* it is necessary, in order to know the truth and the real good (and so to obtain the real good that we all desire), not only to acquire understanding but also previously to have the rest of our desires trained in such a way that the soul can be directed by the desire for the truth.<sup>319</sup> This is the reason why the pedagogical project of the *Republic* does not consist just in an intellectual training but in the education of desires from early childhood onwards.<sup>320</sup>

### 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement

#### 3.3.1. Judgment as instrument of reason in the analysis of the authentic and inauthentic pleasures

The epistemological implications of the analysis of authentic and inauthentic pleasures at 9.581c6 ff. seems to invite us to suppose that reason is always responsible for all kinds of judgement and especially of judgements about what is good. Three arguments are given in order to ‘prove’ that the pleasure of knowing the truth is the only authentic pleasure.

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<sup>318</sup> So both things seem to be true: the desire for the real good leads us to desire wisdom and the desire for wisdom leads us to desire what is really good.

<sup>319</sup> For example, to train the appetites with the help of the ‘spirited’ part and reason’s orientation to keep within appropriate limits and so to avoid ἀκρασία, which would make an obstacle to acquiring a permanent knowledge of what is good and true and might even provoke the corruption of reason.

<sup>320</sup> As Kahn asserts in the *Republic* and the *Symposium* “the process of enlightenment for reason is at the same time a process of reeducation for desires”, where the rational desire leads (Kahn (1987), p. 101). On the need to cultivate the love of knowledge (φιλομαθία) from early childhood on see, for example, 3.411d.1-5.

### 3.3.1.1. Reason's understanding and misunderstanding of the real good (9.581c6-585a5)

The first argument, developed at 9.581c6-585a5, can briefly be summarized as follows. People like the lover of wealth (and the lover of honour) have no experience of knowing the truth -the only real pleasure- and do not use reasoning accompanied by wisdom; for this reason they -wrongly- judge (κρίνειν) what the best things are by using money and profit (or honour in the case of the lover of honour) as criteria (9.582b2-583e9). In this way the lover of wealth (like the lover of honour) erroneously considers the pleasures which come from the bodily and are in fact “mere images and shadow-paintings of true pleasure”(9.583b3-7) as the best pleasures (9.581c10-d8). In contrast with this the lover of wisdom, who judges (κρίνειν) according to the best criteria of judgement -namely, experience, reasoning with knowledge (9.582a4-5)-, rightly establishes the knowledge of the truth as the most authentic pleasure. Insofar as non-philosophers have never moved ‘upwards’ and had the experience of knowing the truth, they wrongly believe (οἶεσθαι) and judge (ἡγείσθαι) the absence of pain as real pleasure (9.583c3 ff.; see especially 584e7-585a5) and thus hold unhealthy opinions (μὴ ὑγιεῖς δόξας ἔχουσι, 9.584e8). It is only the philosopher who judges the things in the right way using his experience, knowledge and reasoning.

This argument is fundamentally given in order to demonstrate that the only authentic pleasure is the pleasure of knowing the truth and that the material pleasures -an object of desire of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and also of the θυμοειδές, especially when it is not an ally of reason- fail in being real pleasures. But the argument also implies an epistemological conclusion: that there is a right and a wrong way of judging (κρίνειν) what the best and truest pleasures are. According to what is said at 9.582d7-9 the ὄργανον of judgement is the instrument of the lover of wisdom, i.e. the arguments produced by reason. Besides this, if, as it has been suggested at 4.438a1-5 and 4.439a4-7, the ἐπιθυμητικόν cannot make

judgements and calculations about what is good and bad (apparently only reason can), the most plausible conclusion is that it is to be only reason that either rightly establishes what the most authentic pleasure is -when judging on its own- or wrongly judges the bodily pleasures to be the authentic pleasures -when appetites or love of honour dominate the soul and reason is their servant and reason is forced to use what benefits these parts as the criterion for making its judgements (8.553d1-7). The idea that the right judgement of the philosopher about what is good and bad is based on wisdom (φρόνησις) and reasoning (λογίζεσθαι) (9.582e7-9) seems to be a reference to the method of dialectic through which he arrives at the truth according to Books 6 and 7.<sup>321</sup> The philosopher's judgments about what is good and bad would be supported by the right beliefs acquired in his childhood (as the ὁρθὴ δόξα of what is to be feared and what not, 3.430b) until he attains a definite understanding of the foundations of these right beliefs with the knowledge of the Good (in case this ever happens in absolute terms).<sup>322</sup> In other words the philosopher has had his reason developed through an appropriate education; but we must suppose that the non-philosopher's reason, though without correct training, also makes judgments (they have a rational part after all). The difference is that these judgments are either wrong or only randomly right.

We can say that what the appetites look for -food, drink, sex, money and the bodily pleasures in general- is 'their good' in the sense that those are the objects towards which they drive. But this does not imply any understanding from the appetites but just an automatic pull towards the object of desire. It is rather reason, which, being dominated by the appetites, or by the love of honour when this is

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<sup>321</sup> For this interpretation of φρόνησις in connection with Books 6 and 7, see Stokes (1990), pp. 20-21.

<sup>322</sup> This is why at 9.585b14 there is a reference to true opinion together with knowledge. "True opinions" are a necessary transitional state to make possible the construction of a just life addressed to the search of the truth and the real good until the knowledge of the Good is attained (if possible). See below **Chapter 2, Section III, 2. Higher education**, pp. 214 ff..

also finally dragged about by the appetites, misunderstands what the real good is and makes its calculations according to a wrong general goal of life.

For example, insofar as the oligarchic man is a man governed by the necessary desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, he wrongly conceives wealth as the good (8.555b8-10; 8.562b3-4). So, his whole existence being aimed towards that goal, he uses the λογιστικόν just to get wealth and only *reasons* and “examines” (σκοπεῖν) in relation to this goal.<sup>323</sup>

τὸ δέ γε οἶμαι λογιστικόν τε καὶ θυμοειδὲς χαμαὶ ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν παρακαθίσας ὑπ’ ἐκείνῳ καὶ καταδουλωσάμενος, τὸ μὲν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐὰν λογίζεσθαι οὐδὲ σκοπεῖν ἄλλ’ ἢ ὁπόθεν ἐξ ἐλαττόνων χρημάτων πλείω ἔσται, τὸ δὲ αὖ θαυμάζειν καὶ τιμᾶν μηδὲν ἄλλο ἢ πλουῦτόν τε καὶ πλουσίους, καὶ φιλοτιμεῖσθαι μηδ’ ἐφ’ ἐνὶ ἄλλῳ ἢ ἐπὶ χρημάτων κτήσει καὶ ἐάν τι ἄλλο εἰς τοῦτο φέρῃ.<sup>324</sup>

Something similar happens in the case of the democratic man. The soul of this man, who has his life controlled by the desire for freedom to satisfy the unnecessary as well as the necessary appetites (8.562b9-12), is empty of true and beautiful speeches and good rules of behaviour (8.560b7-10). It is also void of true words that say that some pleasures are good and honourable and others base (8.561b7-c4). This emptiness of his soul is filled by arrogant and false discourses, which make a transposition in his soul in relation to what is good and bad.

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<sup>323</sup> Also what is to be honoured and to be fought for –the target of the θυμοειδὲς– is reduced to wealth.

<sup>324</sup> “As for the rational and spirited parts of the soul, he makes them sit on the ground, one on each side, below the desiring element, reducing them to slavery. *The rational part he bans from all subjects of calculation or inquiry other than ways of turning a little money into a lot*, while the only things he allows the spirited part to admire and respect are wealth and wealthy people. The only thing it may pride itself on is acquisition of money, or anything which contributes to this end.” (8.553d1-7).

In the case of the tyrant there is a complete destruction of any remaining good opinion or habit (9.573a4-b4) and the best part of our soul -τὸ λογιστικόν- is enslaved by a tyrannical passion (ἔρωξ) and is at its service (9.577d1-5), so that his right beliefs about what is good and bad are now overmastered by the opinions normally repressed in sleep and refrained by the laws (9.574d1-575a8), i.e. what is good and bad is subjected to the tyranny of the lawless desires. Again these evaluative -in this case wrong judgements about what is good and bad- have to be made by reason, which is now aimed in a wrong general direction.

### 3.3.1.2. Right and wrong judgements made by reason

But the last ‘proof’ in the analysis of the authentic and inauthentic pleasures (585a8 ff.) seems to imply an even wider epistemological claim. Here it is said that the bodily pleasures do not provide authentic replenishment because, when they produce pleasure by satisfying the emptiness of the bodily dispositions related to the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν<sup>325</sup> (like hunger and thirst and similar states that are filled by food, drinks, etc), the soul clings to mortal and changeable things.<sup>326</sup> This kind of thing is concerned with the bodily and partakes less of the truth and of reality than the things that properly fill the soul -knowledge, true belief, the whole of virtue- and are related to what is ever like itself and immortal and to the truth.<sup>327</sup> Thus, when soul is led by the appetites or the love of honour

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<sup>325</sup> Finally the θυμοειδές is weakened, overwhelmed and dragged by the appetites in their direction, when it is not led by reason. See 9.590b6-9.

<sup>326</sup> ...τὸ μηδέποτε ὁμοίου καὶ θνητοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸ τοιοῦτον καὶ ἐν τοιούτῳ γιγνόμενον... (“...that which is connected with what is never the same, and mortal -itself possessing those qualities, and being found in the context of things with those qualities...” (9.585c3-5).

<sup>327</sup> ...τὸ δόξης τε ἀληθοῦς εἶδος καὶ ἐπιστήμης καὶ νοῦ καὶ συλλήβδην αὐτὴ πάσης ἀρετῆς [...] τὸ τοῦ αἰεὶ ὁμοίου ἐχόμενον καὶ ἀθανάτου καὶ ἀληθείας, καὶ αὐτὸ τοιοῦτον ὄν καὶ ἐν τοιούτῳ γιγνόμενον... (“...the kind made up of true opinion, knowledge,

and is dragged towards the mutable and changeable, reason not only fails in judging which are real pleasures -and so what is good and bad- but also, in a more general way, as Gosling puts it,<sup>328</sup> “untrue pleasures introduce an element of illusion and false judgement into life”. This seems to imply that appetites give rise not only to reason’s misconception of the good but may also make reason produce wrong beliefs and judgments in general, insofar as they connect the soul with what is mutable, changeable and less true, so that they are a source of falsehood or at least of something that is not absolutely true. A more general wariness about emotions, perceptions and the body’s appetites that we find in the *Republic* also seems to be related to this point: insofar as they also connect the soul with the changeable, they may make reason produce false judgements, help the activation and growth of the appetites and prevent reason from considering things on its own and trying to attain real knowledge. In other words in the *Republic*, as much as in the *Phaedo*, two ways in which reason can operate are identified: reason inquiring “in company with the body” and staying in the realm of appearance; reason trying to get true knowledge by examining things on its own and so developing its essential power.<sup>329</sup>

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understanding and in fact the whole of human excellence [...]. That which is connected with what is always the same, immortal and true, -itself possessing these qualities and being found in the context of things with these qualities...” (9.585b14-c5).

<sup>328</sup> Gosling (1982), p. 128.

<sup>329</sup> As said earlier at *Rep.* 7.523a1-525a2, although judgements through the report of sense-perceptions at times can be right (7.523b), sensation often cannot be trusted –especially in cases such as distant appearances and shadow-painting (7.523a10-b4)- because contradictory judgements are made on basis of them. In these cases “thought” (νόησις) and “calculating reason” (λογισμός) (7.524b3-5) have to reconsider things on their own, independently of the senses, in order to get true judgements (7.524e2-525a2). Similarly in *Phaed.* 64c-67b the complaint about the senses is that the clearest knowledge requires us to think about things as much as possible αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ –i.e. without the senses and, in a more general sense, without the body’s concerns. Interest in the bodily leads to “a whole range of intelligent inquiry that [...] fails to produce answers of timeless validity, or even adequate explanations of the phenomena investigated” (ch. 10 of Gosling (1983b), p. 173), i.e. fails to produce knowledge or at least lead towards it. As the ‘argument from recollection’ tries to show (72e-77a), sense-perceptions can be useful for thought

### 3.3.2. τῶν φαύλων τι ἐν ἡμῖν in *Republic* 10

However, there seems to be a serious objection to the interpretation that I propose. This originates in 10.602c1-608b10, insofar as this passage, part of the argument against mimetic poetry (10.595c6-608b10), which has been often considered as a proof that the appetitive part has beliefs and makes judgements.<sup>330</sup> I shall now analyse all the sections of the argument that suggest this more usual interpretation in order to show later on how these same tokens can fit with another interpretation more coherent with other parts of the same context and with previous contexts of the *Republic*. The reasons for thinking that in this part of Book 10 there is a reference to the ἐπιθυμητικόν as a part that judges and believes can be summarized as follows:

1. Two parts of the soul are distinguished: on the one hand, there is the λογιστικόν, which measures, calculates and weighs (μετρεῖν, ἀριθμεῖν καὶ

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only if they awaken the need to get rid of them as much as possible and reflect and think about what is by itself. In the *Theaetetus* there is a more refined distinction: beliefs and judgements based on sense-perceptions clearly do not belong to the senses themselves but are the result of the mind's operation with what is provided by sense-perception (on this point see M. Frede (1987)). This does not contradict but seems rather to develop what is said in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo* (differently M. Frede (1987), p.4 and Burnyeat (1976), pp. 34-36). Murphy (1951), p. 243 thinks that at least the treatment of sense-perception in *Republic* 10 seems to anticipate the later treatment in the *Theaetetus*.

<sup>330</sup> See Penner (1971), 100-108; Moline (1978), esp. 10-15; Annas (1981), pp. 338-344; Many of these authors are mentioned by Janaway (1995), pp.143-157, especially p. 144 n. 21 and p. 146 n. 25. In n. 21 Janaway also mentions some texts given by Burnyeat (1976) in order to support this point. But 9.574d5-575a6 implies evaluation of good and bad and only reason can do this according to what was established in Book 4, although in this case it does it wrongly insofar as the good opinions of the rational part are overwhelmed by the appetites. 4.442c10-d1, which says that all the parts share the opinion that reason has to rule, can be taken as saying that appetites and the 'spirited' element have been well trained in earlier education so that reason can establish what is the best thing to do without being 'dragged' about by them and considering their interests. Price also thinks that the ἐπιθυμητικόν has beliefs related to sensory appearances (Price (1995), pp. 48-72).

ἴσταναι 10.602d6; see also μέτρῳ καὶ λογισμῷ, 10.603a4) and is the best part of the soul (βέλτιστον ... τῆς ψυχῆς, 10.603a4-5); on the other hand, there is “one of the base things in us” (τῶν φαύλων..τι...ἐν ἡμῖν, 10.603a7-8), which holds beliefs in contradiction to measurements of reason (10.603a1-8). Insofar as the same principle of contradiction used at 4.436b and 4.436e-437a for distinguishing the three parts of the soul is alluded to at 10.603a1-2 and especially at 10.603d in relation to the distinction of the rational part from “the inferior aspect of us”, it seems natural to suppose that, one aspect of the soul being the λογιστικόν, the other part is either the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the θυμοειδές or just the ἐπιθυμητικόν.<sup>331</sup>

2. This base part of the soul, which the mimetic art prompts, is related to the affliction that leads an individual into grief against the advice of reason (τὸ μὲν ἀντιτείνειν διακελευόμενον λόγος καὶ νόμος ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ ἔλκον ἐπὶ τὰς λύπας αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος, 10.604b1)<sup>332</sup>. Similarly at 4.439d1-2 the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν are associated with what draws and drags the soul through affections and diseases (τὰ...ἄγοντα καὶ ἔλκοντα διὰ παθημάτων τε καὶ νοσημάτων)<sup>333</sup>.

3. The same inferior aspect of us is also described as insatiable, irrational, passive and fond of cowardice (τὸ δὲ...ἀπλήστως ἔχον αὐτῶν ἄρ' οὐκ ἀλόγιστόν

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<sup>331</sup> While Penner (1971) maintains that for this reason the model of the soul is essentially a ‘bipartite’ model, Halliwell (1993), p. 134 connects the ‘bipartition’ of Book 10 with the fact that in Book 4 the ‘spirited’ part was shown as “capable of ‘allying’ itself with either of the others”. However, as we have already seen, the ‘spirited’ part is different from the other two parts anyway insofar as it has its proper characteristics and desires.

<sup>332</sup> “... what drags him back to his grief is his misfortune itself. ...”

<sup>333</sup> “...the things which drive or draw them towards drink are the products of feelings and disorders ...”



τε φήσομεν εἶναι καὶ ἀργὸν καὶ δειλίας φίλον, 10.604d8-10)<sup>334</sup> and ἄνοητόν (10.605b8). This matches with previous descriptions of the ἐπιθυμητικόν as φύσει ἀπληστότατον (4.442a6-7), ἀλογιστόν (4.439d7) and agent of cowardice (9.590b3-4).

4. Similarly to what is said about the ἐπιθυμητικόν, this base part corrupts the λογιστικόν (see for example at 10.605b3-5)

5. It is related to sexual pleasure, anger, craving, pains and pleasures (καὶ περὶ ἀφροδισίων δὴ καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν ἐπιθυμητικῶν τε καὶ λυπηρῶν καὶ ἡδέων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ..., 10.606d1-2)<sup>335</sup>, which are usually associated with the appetitive part and the ‘spirited’ part.

6. The mimesis that affects this part of the soul is ποικίλη (10.604e1) and the appetitive part is described at 9.588c7 as being of a ποικίλον type. This seems to suggest that the imitative art stimulates the appetitive part.

However, in spite of these points (1-6 above), this problematic section 10.602c1-608b10 allows another interpretation that takes into account other aspects of the passage, maintains more coherence with what was previously established and avoids dealing with things such as desires, emotions, deceptive perceptions as if they were the same thing.

Although the same principle of opposition is used here as in Book 4 -see on this section 1. above- this does not imply that it is being used for making the same

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<sup>334</sup> “ ... which can never gets its fill of these things –won’t we describe this as irrational, lazy and a friend to cowardice?”.

<sup>335</sup> “Doesn’t it apply also to sex, anger, and all the desires, pains and pleasures in the soul ...?”  
(Griffith’s translation slightly modified: I add “in the soul” = ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ).

kind of division.<sup>336</sup> while in Book 4 (and again in Books 8 and 9) the aspects of the soul are distinguished according to their fundamental and distinct desires, in Book 10 the soul is divided, at least in principle, into two parts according to two different and opposite ways of judging reality. The essential distinction that seems to be traced at 10.602c1-603a8 is between reason when it calculates on its own -‘pure reason’ we might say- and so is the best part of the soul; and reason when its judgements are based on sense perception, more specifically on deceptive sense perceptions.<sup>337</sup> Thus at 10.602e4-6 it is said that deceptive sense perceptions appear to the *same* element -i.e. to the rational part- that, working on its own through calculations and measurements, has established things in a different way:

τούτω δὲ πολλάκις μετρήσαντι καὶ σημαίνοντι μείζω ἅττα εἶναι ἢ ἐλάττω ἕτερα ἑτέρων ἢ ἴσα τάναντία φαίνεται ἅμα περὶ ταῦτά.<sup>338</sup>

10.603b10-c2 also suggests that this inferior part of us denotes an intellectual aspect of us (διάνοια) that can be misled by mimetic art:

...ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτὸ αὖ ἔλθωμεν τῆς διανοίας τοῦτο ὧς προσομιλεῖ ἡ τῆς ποιήσεως μιμητική, καὶ ἴδωμεν φαῦλον ἢ σπουδαῖόν ἐστιν.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Similarly Halliwell (1993), p. 134.

<sup>337</sup> Similarly Murphy (1951), p. 243 says: “... what he is saying in Book X could be put in this form, that the senses frequently misrepresent physical facts and lead us to false conclusions; these falsities we accept if we are careless, and we are especially likely to do so under aesthetic mesmerism; but a vigilant intelligence (though it cannot alter the sensation) will not be misled by erroneous suggestion”. Differently Halliwell (1993), p. 134.

<sup>338</sup> “Quite often this element [i.e. the rational element] makes its measurements, indicates that one group of things is bigger or smaller than another -or the same size- but simultaneously finds that the same group of objects presents exactly the opposite appearance.” (10.602e4-6). (A different translation according to which “indications would conflict in the person rather than in a single element” is also possible. See Griffith (2000), p. 323, n. 10).

This mental aspect is very unlikely to represent the ἐπιθυμητικόν. Again, in the opening of Book 10 at 595b3-7, concern is expressed about mimetic poetry because it affects the mind (διάνοια) without the presence of the antidote of knowing the truth. This implies that the part affected is the same as the one that, when the person has a philosophical way of life, can know the truth.

If so, at 10.603a1-2 “one of the base things of us”, referring to something that opines against reason, can better be described as an inferior and degenerated manifestation of the λογιστικόν than as the ἐπιθυμητικόν.

However, this “inferior part in us” -opposite to the “best part of us”, i.e. reason when it does its proper job of calculating and advising- includes not only this corrupted aspect of the rational part that opines and makes wrong judgements: it also embraces the deceptive sense-perceptions themselves that are the grounds for these wrong judgments. In this sense it is said that the mimetic art as a whole associates with this base element in us (φάυλω συγγινομένη, 10.603b4) and actually produces base offspring (φάυλα γεννᾷ, 10.603b4) because it tries to affect our sight (κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν, 10.603b6) in the case of painting –the perspective-painting (σκιαγραφία) that stimulates deceptive perceptions like the ones produced by sight’s deceit (τὴν πλάνην τῆς ὀψεως, 10.602c12)- or our hearing (κατὰ τὴν ἀκοήν) in the case of poetry (10.603b6). Insofar as sense-perceptions (especially deceptive sense-perceptions, and even more the copies of these misleading perceptions made by the mimetic art, copies which as such belong to an inferior level of reality) encourage attachment to appearances (to what is far from wisdom and the truth 10.603a10-b2), they contribute to the malfunctioning and final destruction of the rational part in its proper use.

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<sup>339</sup> “... but let us approach in turn that part of the mind to which mimetic poetry appeals and see whether it is the inferior or the nobly serious part.” (I follow here Shorey’s translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith’s translation.)

This “base aspect of us” -which is at odds with reason as the best part of the soul which calculates, measures, reasons and advises- also includes emotions such as grief:

οὐκοῦν τὸ μὲν ἀντιτείνειν διακελευόμενον λόγος καὶ νόμος ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ ἔλκον ἐπὶ τὰς λύπας αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος; [...] ἐναντίας δὲ ἀγωγῆς γιγνομένης ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ περὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἅμα, δύο φαμέν αὐτῷ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι;<sup>340</sup>

The “ignoble in us” embraces not only grief but also what recollects grief and so encourages lamentations:

τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἀναμνήσεις τε τοῦ πάθους καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ὀδυρμοὺς ἄγον καὶ ἀπλήστως ἔχον αὐτῶν ἄρ' οὐκ ἀλόγιστόν τε φήσομεν εἶναι καὶ ἀργὸν καὶ δειλίας φίλον;<sup>341</sup>

When the poet reproduces these states of grief and pain, he nourishes this base element of the soul and, like the painter, produces things that are “in a poor relation to the truth”. In this way he contributes to the corruption of the rational element (10.605a8-c4). This suggests that emotions are considered base mainly

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<sup>340</sup> “Are reason and established customs the things that encourage him to resist, while what drags him back to his grief is his misfortune itself? [...] And when a human being has opposing impulses, relating to the same at the same time, we say these must necessarily be two different elements.” (10.604a10-b4).

<sup>341</sup> “Whereas the element which draws us towards mourning and the recollection of our sufferings, which can never get its fill of these things –won’t we describe this as irrational, lazy and a friend of cowardice?” (10.604d8-10).

because of their harmful epistemological consequences on reason's capacity to calculate, reason and know the truth.<sup>342</sup>

In his nourishment of this ignoble part of the soul through the representation of sorrows and lamentations, the poet also gives pleasure to and satisfies this aspect of us, instead of starving it according to reason's advice:

εἰ ἐνθυμοῖο ὅτι τὸ βία κατεχόμενον τότε ἐν ταῖς οἰκείαις  
 συμφοραῖς καὶ πεπεινηκὸς τοῦ δακρυῦσαί τε καὶ ἀποδύρασθαι  
 ἵκανῶς καὶ ἀποπλησθῆναι, φύσει δὲ τοιοῦτον οἶον τούτων ἐπιθυμεῖν  
 [...].<sup>343</sup>

Something similar happens in the case of comedy (10.606c2-9). In a more general sense the imitative poet works on sexual appetites, passions, pains, pleasures and also anger -which is proper to the 'spirited' part- and in this way destroys what is the best in us:

καὶ περὶ ἀφροδισίων δὴ καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν  
 ἐπιθυμητικῶν τε καὶ λυπηρῶν καὶ ἡδέων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἃ δὴ φάμεν  
 πάσῃ πράξει ἡμῖν ἔπεσθαι, ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἡμᾶς ἡ ποιητικὴ μίμησις

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<sup>342</sup> That is why in the earlier education the promotion of strong emotions through artistic education is rejected. See for example, the rejection of the harmonies that reproduce patterns of feelings like mourning and lamentations (3.398d11 ff.) and the dismissal of laughter as "a violent agent of change" (3.388d5-389b1). They ruin the rational part in two ways: a) because they put the soul in contact with the bodily and so help to nourish the appetitive part of the soul and make this current stronger; b) because they separate the soul from the unchangeable, which is the kind of realm akin to the rational part.

<sup>343</sup> "Think about it. Here we have this element which in one situation –in our private misfortunes- is forcibly held in check, though it has this hunger which can only be satisfied by weeping and wholesale lamentation, since these are the satisfactions this kind of thing by its nature desires." (10.606a3-7).

ἐργάζεται· τρέφει γὰρ ταῦτα ἄρδουσα, δέον αὐχμεῖν, καὶ ἄρχοντα ἡμῖν καθίστησιν δέον ἄρχεσθαι αὐτὰ ἵνα βελτίους τε καὶ εὐδαιμονέστεροι ἀντὶ χειρόνων καὶ ἀθλιωτέρων γινώμεθα.<sup>344</sup>

So τῶν φαύλων τι ἐν ἡμῖν denotes aspects of the human soul and the human experience in the world as these affect and are capable of distorting reason. The coincidences of characteristics of this “base” element in us with characteristics of the appetitive part (see in this section 2.-6. above) is now understandable, insofar as the appetitive aspect is itself part of the “the ignoble in us”. But “what is ignoble in us” also includes, as seen above, other affections and experiences -such as distorted perceptions and overdeveloped emotions- insofar as they also contribute to our judging reality according to the appearances and not according to what really is.<sup>345</sup> This interpretation of τῶν φαύλων τι ἐν ἡμῖν also fits very well with the general aim of the whole section 10.595c6-608b10, of showing that imitative poetry has to be rejected,<sup>346</sup> insofar as it has an unhealthy effect on the

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<sup>344</sup> “Doesn’t it apply also to sex, anger, and all the desires, pains and pleasures in the soul which we say accompany any of our actions? Isn’t the effect of poetic imitation on us the same? It feeds and waters these things, when they ought by rights to wither away. And it makes them our rulers, though if we want to be better and happier rather than worse and more wretched, they ought to be ruled by us” (10.606d1-7) (Griffith’s translation slightly modified: I add “in the soul” = ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ).

<sup>345</sup> Similarly Burnyeat (1976), pp. 34-35 says: “...Plato’s view in Book 10 is that we can be set against ourselves in innumerable ways (603d), and in making his divisions he is clearly less interested in the precise identity of these various opponents of reason than in describing the disturbances they create in the soul. So it is probably a mistake to try to fit them or perception in particular into the earlier scheme of the soul”.

<sup>346</sup> The problematic character of Book 10 has usually been pointed out. One of the most important problems is that poetry is mainly understood as imitation and that all imitation is treated as bad (see Murphy (1951), p. 224; Annas (1981), pp. 336 ff.). This disagrees with what is said in Books 2 and 3 in relation to the use of poetry for the education of the young guardians and especially with the admission of certain kinds of imitation (394a). Tate’s understanding of and solution to this problem -namely, that μίμησις can be good or bad; good imitation is accepted in the earlier education of

soul of its recipient, especially by encouraging misunderstanding in his soul and, above all, corrupting reason.<sup>347</sup> This misunderstanding is created by the imitator through encouraging the wrong emotions, deceptive perceptions, appetites, etc. and thus nourishing his soul and the audience's soul with appearances (φαινόμενα, 10.596e4; φαντάσματα, 10.598b3-5), mere fakes (εἰδωλα, 10.598b8; 10.599a7), simulacra of excellence (the term is εἰδωλα ἀρετῆς, 10.600e5), something that is like the real but not real itself (οἷον τὸ ὄν, ὄν δὲ οὐ, 10.597a5), insofar as the imitator produces things three grades removed from reality,<sup>348</sup> the imitator being three grades removed from the truth (10.599a2ff.) and having neither knowledge nor right beliefs (10.602a3-6).<sup>349</sup> Besides this, according to the interpretation that I propose, a better connection between Book 10 and Book 9 is possible, insofar as the attachment to appearances of Book 10 promoted by

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the guardians; bad education is condemned in Book 10- has been accepted by several scholars during the last century, although some, like Grube, Shorey and Nehamas, have disagreed (for a good summary of the *status quaestionis* and secondary literature's references see Nehamas (1982), p. 49 and esp. pp. 70-71 nn. 5-6). On how the good kind of μίμησις has to presuppose knowledge of the truth by the poet see Rowe (1997), pp. 443-447. Discussion of this problem leads to a discussion of the meaning of μίμησις in Plato's times and specifically in *Republic* 10 (see Murphy (1951), pp. 230-231; Nehamas (1982), pp. 56 ff.; Rowe (1997) p. 440).

<sup>347</sup> This is suggested in the two claims in which Book 10 opens: that, using previous analysis of the soul into 'parts' or 'aspects' it becomes now clearer why the mimetic art has to be rejected (10.595a5-b1); and that mimetic poetry is dangerous especially for the *mind* (διάνοια) of those who hear it without the antidote of knowing the true nature of things (10.595b3-7).

<sup>348</sup> The metaphysical degradation of the product of the imitator is established through the comparison of all kinds of imitative poetry with painting, in which the metaphysics of the Forms is taken for granted.

<sup>349</sup> This is established through the argument of the user of an object as the best knower of it (10.601c-602b). For an analysis of the problems of the two first arguments of *Republic* 10 (10.591c-601b; 10.601c-602b) see Annas (1981), pp. 336 ff. and especially Janaway (1995), pp. 133-142. Janaway highlights the point that the reflections in Book 10 about other craftsmen like cobblers, shoemakers –and also about an hypothetical ideal craftsman of the universe- are aimed at indicating that poets like Homer and also the audience that approves and celebrates them lack knowledge in the terms in which it has clearly been defined in the previous books of the *Republic*.

mimetic poetry is similar to -but shown as even worse than- the connection that the bodily pleasures (9.585d1-4) make with “what is never the same and mortal” (9.585c3-5) and with what has “a smaller share of both truth and of the being” (9.585d7-9), these pleasures being “not true or pure but a kind of shadow-picture (ἔσκιαγραφημένη)” (9.583b5).<sup>350</sup>

### **3.4. The λογιστικόν’s performance in relation to each part of the soul**

The way in which the rational part operates in relation to each part according to its knowledge and desire for the real good, when it rules the soul, can be described as follows.

#### **3.4.1. The rational part’s performance in relation to its own aims**

In the case of its own aims, when the λογιστικόν rules the soul (9.586d4-587a1), it looks for the truth (both the earlier and especially the higher education in mathematics and dialectic can be understood as belonging to this process of searching for the truth). Insofar as true and full knowledge consists in the knowledge of the Form of the Good, which comprehends the individual (as well as the social) good, its desire for the truth includes the desire for the good of the soul as a whole and also of each part.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> This interpretation answers objections like the one made by Annas to the argument at *Rep.* 10.602-605c (1981), p. 338: “How can the strength and importunate nature of one’s desires have anything to do with one’s being taken in by optical illusions?”

<sup>351</sup> The government of the λογιστικόν implies, as Cooper (1999), p. 193 suggests, that the rational part desires “by appeal to its own principles [which are got from the knowledge of the Form of the Good] what things are good and how good they are”.



...ἔχον αὖ κάκεινο ἐπιστήμην ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ συμφέροντος ἐκάστω  
τε καὶ ὅλῳ τῷ κοινῷ σφῶν αὐτῶν τριῶν ὄντων.<sup>352</sup>

This leadership of the λογιστικόν over the soul (or society) allows each part to achieve its aims (in the case of the soul, its own pleasures) as far as possible. In the ideal state the just ruler would similarly have knowledge of what is advantageous for the city as a whole and for each part of society (4.428c11-4), i.e. would know what the common good is, what is good for each human being but understood from a social perspective.<sup>353</sup> As a dialectician, the philosopher possesses such a comprehension of individual and common good (i.e. of what Plato calls ‘justice’) in the light of the Good, which is discussed later in Books 6 and 7. For this reason knowledge of the Good is the maximum good attainable to him; however, we must at the same time remember that knowledge of the Good is inferior to the Good itself.<sup>354</sup> This knowledge of the good -and with it the achievement of the real good that we all desire- requires the person already to be just, i.e. to have his soul ruled by the rational part. However, at the same time<sup>355</sup> a

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<sup>352</sup> “...by its [i.e. the rational part’s] possession in turn within it of the knowledge of what is beneficial for each and for the whole, the community composed of the three.” (4.442c6-8). (I follow Shorey’s translation here. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith’s translation.)

<sup>353</sup> This knowledge of the philosopher in relation to the common good also implies the acceptance of the responsibility of ἀρχειν and in this sense desire for ruling (but reluctantly 7.519d4-7 ff.). See n. 356 below.

<sup>354</sup> According to the analysis of pleasure in Book 9 the knowledge of the truth (we must think in any of its forms (9.585b9-c5) but especially in its maximum form, the knowledge of the Good) is the good for us because it is also the most authentic pleasure that we can obtain. In this section of Book 9 knowledge is not considered as being different from pleasure (which is the common point of view and the one that appears in the *Gorgias* or at 6.505b) but as the highest form of it.

<sup>355</sup> Here there is a paradox because, on the one hand, the knowledge of the truth and the good includes the knowledge that the rational part has to rule but, on the other hand, the achievement of this knowledge requires the rational part to be already ruling that life. This paradox can be understood in the following way: through education (an education such as the one described in the ideal city of the *Republic*) the individual has gradually learned to be governed by this part and at a

desire of the rational part for ἄρχειν<sup>356</sup> seems to emerge from this knowledge and desire for the real good, insofar as the λογιστικόν knows that the rational part, being the only one that knows what is the good for each part and the whole, has to ἄρχειν over the other parts (4.441e4). The agreement of the three parts over the rule of the λογιστικόν is called “moderation” (σωφροσύνη) (4.442c10-d3).

### 3.4.2. The rational part’s performance in relation to the appetitive part

In relation to the ἐπιθυμητικόν, as we have also seen above in the deduction of the parts of the soul in *Section I*, pp.17-18 in relation to the example of the man who wants and does not want to drink, the λογιστικόν can have forms of desire that restrict and master (κρατεῖν) positive inclinations of the ἐπιθυμητικόν according to rational calculations (ἐκ λογισμοῦ).<sup>357</sup> Insofar as the

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certain point (when he knows the Good) is definitely governed by it and knows that the good for him and any individual is to be governed by this rational aspect.

<sup>356</sup> For a similar interpretation see Kahn (1987). This is slightly different from what Cooper (1999), p.192 proposes, insofar as he considers the desire for ἄρχειν to be a different desire from the desire for the truth. But the basic impulse of reason seems always to be the desire to know the truth and the real good and the desire to rule (ἄρχειν) emerges just as a consequence of the understanding that it is good that rationality ‘rules’. This is clearer in the case of the philosopher-king and his ‘desire’ to rule the city. In fact, he can even feel certain reluctance to rule insofar as this government interferes with his enjoyment of looking for the truth in speculative terms. In fact the rulers of the ideal city must be lovers of truth but not lovers of rule (see 7.521b). However he desires to rule because he realizes that it is the better thing to do. On the other hand, the desire to rule does not belong exclusively to the rational part: the other parts also want to rule the soul in order to attain the objects of their desires. But while the work of ruling is proper to the rational part, the control of the soul is not essentially a task for the other two parts (because by definition they do not possess the knowledge to do it, although the ‘spirited’ part can be an ‘auxiliary’ for reason’s government). See 4.442a4-5; b5-9; c5-8, 444d8-e5.

<sup>357</sup> λογιστικόν is one of Plato’s many synonyms for the intellectual principle. See 4.441c, 9.571c4, 9.587d11, 10.605b4-5. It emphasises the moral calculation of consequences, as opposed

ἐπιθυμητικόν —even when it is restricted, through an appropriate training, to the necessary desires- looks for its objects independently of their specific qualities and especially *independently of their goodness or badness* (as I have attempted to demonstrate above),<sup>358</sup> we must suppose that the restrictions of the λογιστικόν come from its knowledge of what is good and bad.<sup>359</sup> So the ‘pulling’ is between two different sources of motivation: reason’s desire for the real good and the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν, whose triumph over the soul would produce a false conception of the good in the rational part. If the λογιστικόν is completely corrupted by the lawless desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν (as in the case of the tyranny), it is unable to recognize that some impulses of the ἐπιθυμητικόν are bad. In this case there is likely to be no conflict between the appetites and the desire for the truth and the real good of the λογιστικόν, insofar as reason is already dominated by the appetites and in its proper function deteriorated.<sup>360</sup>

### 3.4.3. The rational part’s performance in relation to the ‘spirited’ part

In relation to the rational part, as we have seen before, the θυμοειδές is bivalent and can either follow rational advice or go against it (παρὰ λογισμόν, 4.440b1). When the λογιστικόν governs the soul, reason’s role in relation to the ‘spirited’

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to blind passion” (Shorey (1946) [1930], vol. I, p. 397). In relation to the government of the λογιστικόν over the ἐπιθυμητικόν with the help of the θυμοειδές, see n. 349 *ad finem*.

<sup>358</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I, 1.1. The deduction of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the λογιστικόν from ...**, pp. 109 ff..

<sup>359</sup> As I have argued before, knowledge of the individual good is part of the knowledge of the Form of the Good (as Cooper says (see nn. 347 and 350), which is the truth looked for by the dialectician. So it is not ‘other’ than the desire for the truth as he says on p. 192. On how the λογιστικόν operates in relation to the ἐπιθυμητικόν in the just (wise) man see 9.591c1-e5.

<sup>360</sup> ...ὥς ἀπὸ πάσης λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως. (9.571c8-9).

part is to advise, to convince it<sup>361</sup> to gain it as a natural ally<sup>362</sup> on its side.<sup>363</sup> When the λογιστικόν gains the θυμοειδές as -i.e. persuades it to be- its ally, i.e. when the 'spirited' part has gone through a right process of habituation and, at the same time, reason has acquired right beliefs, the blockade of the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν that are not licit occurs by the combination of the rational counsel of the λογιστικόν with the execution of these recommended actions by the θυμοειδές (4.442b5-9). In other words the λογιστικόν seems to provide the right beliefs about what is to be feared and dared, while the θυμοειδές is habituated to directing its aggressiveness in the right way. In this sense reason guides the 'spirited' part towards the real good, insofar as the θυμοειδές' impulse and assertiveness towards victory contributes to the keeping of the right beliefs in the midst of pains and pleasures.<sup>364</sup> Again, the understanding of what is honourable and what is not -i.e. the right beliefs about this- is provided by the λογιστικόν. The θυμοειδές orients its assertiveness in that direction.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> On εὐβουλία as a form of ἐπιστήμη see 4.428b6.

<sup>362</sup> ...συμμαχεῖ τῷ δοκοῦντι δικάϊω... (4.440c8).

<sup>363</sup> ...αὐτό' [i.e. τὸ θυμοειδές] ἐν τῇ τῆς ψυχῆς στάσει τίθεσθαι τὰ ὄπλα πρὸς τὸ λογιστικόν. (4.440e5-6).

<sup>364</sup> This is what is called ἀνδρεία at 4.442b11-c3. Terms like 'counsel' and 'persuasion' as regards the actions of the λογιστικόν in relation to the θυμοειδές seem to suggest some rationality in the θυμοειδές. But this can be simply understood in the sense that the rational part provides right beliefs about what is honourable and worth fighting for. In this way the λογιστικόν gives rise to the aggressiveness proper to the 'spirited' part.

<sup>365</sup> See for example 9.592a ff. on the guiding principle supplied by the rational part in order to direct properly the love of honour of the 'spirited' part.

### 3.5. Conclusion

Thus, if we go back again the ‘hydraulic image of the soul’, we can see that, if the λογιστικόν, though the smallest part of us (4.428e7), has its desire for the truth and the real good increased through the right kind of education (4.431a3-c7), it governs one’s life –as in the case of the lover of wisdom- and draws the stream of desires in that direction.

ὥ δὴ πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα καὶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐρρυήκασιν, περὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς οἶμαι ἡδονὴν αὐτῆς καθ’ αὐτὴν εἶεν ἄν, τὰς δὲ διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐκλείποιεν, εἰ μὴ πεπλασμένως ἀλλ’ ἀληθῶς φιλόσοφος τις εἴη.<sup>366</sup>

So the possibility of not only desiring the good -which is common to all human beings- but also attaining what is really good -for which it is necessary to know what is really good- lies in the right development of the λογιστικόν and its desire for the truth accompanied by an appropriate habituation of the desires of the other two parts. This development of reason is possible through the programme of education of the ideal city. In the earlier education reason incorporates right beliefs and appropriate harmonies in order to promote its love of wisdom and recognition of what is good and beautiful. At the same time, the desire for victory and honour of the θυμοειδές is developed through physical training and trained through habituation in order to attack and defend in the correct way so that the ‘spirited’ part becomes a helper of reason, one that can be easily ‘convinced’ to follow and execute reason’s prescriptions and calculations. Simultaneously, the desires of the ἐπιθυμητικόν are also restricted through reproduction and

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<sup>366</sup> “In someone whose stream flows in the direction of learning and everything like it, I imagine the desires will be concerned with the pleasure of the mind alone, just by itself. They will give up the pleasures arising out of the body. That’s assuming the person is a true philosopher, a genuine lover of wisdom, not a pretend lover.” (6.485d10-e1).

imitation of the kinds of behaviour belonging to self-control over the appetites and through a diet and use of material facilities that are reduced to cover the essential needs. In the higher programme of studies of mathematics and dialectic for the best of the guardians the desire for the truth is fully developed<sup>367</sup> insofar as the dialectician tries to achieve knowledge of what is really good and bad –which has its highest expression in the Good. This provides a reflective understanding of the right beliefs acquired in earlier childhood and comprises the knowledge of the good of the individual and of the good of society from the perspective of the good of reality as a whole. In the next section I offer a more detailed description of the epistemological condition of the lover of wisdom (mainly according to Book 5) and of the kind of education that he has to receive in order to develop his love for the truth (mainly according to Books 2, 3, 6 and 7). In the final section of this chapter I take the eschatological myth of Book 10 as an evaluation in a cosmological context of how much we have developed the desire that constitutes our essence as human beings: the desire for the truth and the real good of our soul (10.611e1-612a6).

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<sup>367</sup> See 9.590e1-591a3.

### *Section III: Education for being a lover of wisdom*

#### **Introduction**

According to what we have already seen above, the three parts of the soul and their proper desires can be developed or enfeebled (and even inhibited) through education. The development, inhibition or enfeeblement that results from education is described in Book 9 through images such as feeding/starving, fortifying/weakening, cultivating/not cultivating, taming/releasing in relation to how the just man as well as the unjust man treat their three parts (9.588e-589a; 9.589b; 9.589e-590a; 9.591b). Education determines which part and desire or desires -the love of wisdom of the rational part, the desire for victory and honour of the 'spirited' part or the appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν- play the leading part in the life of the person. The 'spirited' part's desire for victory finally either makes reason's 'current' stronger, or contributes the strengthening of the 'stream' of the appetites, the θυμοειδές' situation being as follows: either it is trained to fight on reason's side and, in this way, fortifies reason's 'current' of desire for the truth and the real good. Or, if the 'spirited' part is developed but not trained to help reason, the θυμοειδές has just a precarious leadership within the soul because the appetites secretly evolve without limit, so that the appetites' 'current' finally weakens the 'spirited' part and reason and drags the soul in their direction. In this way the final result of the education of the leading desires of each part of the soul is that one of the two main 'currents' of desire is stronger: either reason's 'stream' towards the truth and the real good with the 'spirited' part's support or the appetites' 'current' towards the bodily pleasures and the changeable. Consequently, so long as education for being a lover of wisdom aims at making reason's 'current' as powerful as possible within the soul, it requires not only a specific nourishment of the λογιστικόν itself but also the appropriate training of the constitutive desires of the other two parts. Only if our fundamental sources of motivation for action (which are represented by the proper desires of the three parts of the soul) have been appropriately trained through a right education

from the very beginning of our lives, is a further development of the rational part through mathematics and dialectic possible, so that the 'current' of the desire for the truth and the real good, which constitutes our essence as human beings, not only dominates but gains its highest degree of strength. In this way, in agreement with the Socrates of the early dialogues, in the *Republic* a full unfolding of ourselves as human beings requires an entire development of our intellectual capacities; but now this is possible only if an appropriate configuration of the desires has already been acquired. I would like to summarize now some previous points especially with respect to the earlier education of the three parts, and then to refer more specifically to the earlier and higher education of the rational part and to the characteristics of the lover of wisdom.



## 1. Primary education

### Configuration of desires in early childhood for the leadership of love of wisdom.

The development of the love of wisdom for recognizing the beautiful and the good<sup>368</sup>

#### 1.1. The specific training of the irrational parts

The desires of the irrational parts -the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the θυμοειδές- are educated mainly through habituation so that some inclinations are stimulated and others are atrophied or inhibited. The appetites for food and drink, for example, are trained to keep within appropriate limits through a correct diet (3.403e; 3.404b-e; 8.559a-c) and similarly the appetite for wealth receives minimum stimulation as a result of a life with a small amount of material equipment (3.415e-416d). In the same way, ‘spiritedness’ itself is developed through activities like physical training, hunting (3.410b; 3.411d-e; 8.549a), familiarity with the field of battle (7.537a; 8.547d-548a), and is orientated through habituation to resist and ‘struggle’ against the ‘pull’ of the appetites (3.413c; 4.442b-c), fight only against the enemies of the city (2.375b-c; 6.503a) and, in the case of the philosopher-rulers, keep going in the difficult studies of mathematics and dialectic in spite of adversity (7.535a-d). In this way, on the one hand only the necessary appetites are developed, so that their unavoidable, powerful ‘stream’ towards the changeable and the bodily pleasures is limited and reduced as much as possible. On the other hand, the ‘spirited’ element is developed but at the same time trained to struggle on reason’s side, so that the θυμοειδές makes reason’s ‘current’ stronger.

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<sup>368</sup> The earlier education of Books 2 and 3 deals with several aspects of the soul –for example, emotions such as grief and laughter- and not only with the three parts of soul, which are distinguished from the point of view of desire in Book 4. In the next sections the focus is mainly on how this earlier education determines the development of the desires that are proper to each of the three parts. Information about what encourages and what inhibits the development of the parts can also be gained from other books of the *Republic*.

## **1.2. Education of the love of wisdom through μουσική: acquisition of familiarity with the beautiful and the good**

### **1.2.1. Words, ways, attunements and rhythms of the right musical education. Habituation of the irrational parts through the reproduction of appropriate examples and patterns**

The love of wisdom, which is the proper desire of the rational part, only develops if there is musical education. Otherwise, without musical education, even if this desire exists within the person, it may not wake up at all (3.411d):

τί δὲ ἐπειδὰν ἄλλο μηδὲν πράττει μηδὲ κοινωνῇ Μούσης μηδαμῇ; οὐκ εἶ τι καὶ ἐνῆν αὐτοῦ φιλομαθὲς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἅτε οὔτε μαθήματος γευόμενον οὐδενὸς οὔτε ζητήματος, οὔτε λόγου μετίσχον οὔτε τῆς ἄλλης μουσικῆς, ἀσθενὲς τε καὶ κωφὸν καὶ τυφλὸν γίγνεται, ἅτε οὐκ ἐγειρόμενον οὐδὲ τρεφόμενον οὐδὲ διακαθαίρομένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων αὐτοῦ;<sup>369</sup>

So the purpose of μουσική -which is subdivided into words (ἃ λεκτέον, 392c7; ὁ λόγος, 400d4), the way in which the words are said (ὡς λεκτέον 392c8; τρόπος τῆς λέξεως, 400d6), attunements and rhythms (ἁρμονίας καὶ ῥυθμοῦ 398d2)- is primarily to educate the love of wisdom of the rational aspect of us and to produce a person with a good character and mind (400e). However, musical education also has an indirect effect on the habituation of the other two parts.

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<sup>369</sup> “But suppose that is all he does. Suppose he has no contact with the Muse. Even if he did have some love of learning in his soul, it gets no taste of learning and enquiry, and has no experience of rational argument or any artistic pursuit. As a result, since it never wakes up and has nothing to feed on, and since there is nothing to purify its senses, it becomes weak, and deaf, and blind, doesn’t it?” (411c9-d5).

## a) ὁ λεκτέον

The contents of the stories that the young guardians listen to are selected in order to provide reason with right and true beliefs.<sup>370</sup> Some beliefs fundamental for the future development of the rational part itself are provided. For example, the future guardians should ideally listen only to beautiful, true stories, which describe the divine as it really is.<sup>371</sup> The stories also have to provide examples of self-control and bravery (3.386a-387b; 3.390a-c; 3.395b-c; 3.390d-391c). In this way the young guardians also acquire right beliefs related to the appropriate management of appetites, the 'spirited' part and emotions. For example, they will learn that it is good not to eat and drink too much, not to give oneself up to lust and sexual pleasures, not to be mean.<sup>372</sup> However, insofar as the examples given in the stories show the three parts already interacting, there is a simultaneous training of the irrational parts in right habits when the guardians reproduce these examples in their lives. So this part of the process of education can be described as an habituation of the young guardians' irrational parts through the reproduction of right examples in their lives accompanied with a simultaneous imprinting within their souls of λόγοι that support these habituations. Not only the stories but also what the young guardians see and hear around them every day will determine how the different aspects of the soul are trained. According to this we must suppose that the young guardians are to be surrounded by adults who manage their souls wisely and so give the young guardians right examples to imitate,<sup>373</sup> as is suggested at 9.590e-591a:

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<sup>370</sup> In relation to the need for instructing the young guardians only in the truth see 2.376e-377b; 2.378e; 3.391d-e). What the young guardians have learnt is called δόξα ἀληθής at 413a.

<sup>371</sup> The true characteristics of the divine are: a) the god (ὁ θεός), being good, is only responsible for good (380 c8, d1); b) the god "is single in form and true, both in what he does and what he says" and he does not change himself or deceive (382e8-11).

<sup>372</sup> Avoidance of overdeveloped emotions such as grief and laughter, which also interfere with reason's proper work, is also taught through the kind of stories that are chosen (3.387c-388d; 388d-389a).

<sup>373</sup> In this concept of education the influence of society and culture on the development of the individual is fundamental. On this point see Lear (1992), pp. 186-190. He also explains the inverse

...τὸ μὴ ἔαν [i.e. παίδας] ἐλευθέρους εἶναι, ἕως ἂν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ ἐν πόλει πολιτείαν καταστήσωμεν, καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον θεραπεύσαντες τῷ παρ' ἡμῖν τοιούτῳ ἀντικαταστήσωμεν φύλακα ὅμοιον καὶ ἄρχοντα ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ τότε δὴ ἐλεύθερον ἀφίεμεν.<sup>374</sup>

The idea that a second nature is created within the person through the examples that the individual witnesses and imitates is clearly expressed at 3.395d1-3 in relation to the imitative art but also to imitation in general:

ἢ οὐκ ἦσθησαι ὅτι αἱ μιμήσεις, ἔαν ἐκ νέων πόρρω διατελέσωσιν, εἰς ἔθνη τε καὶ φύσιν καθίστανται καὶ κατὰ σῶμα καὶ φωνὰς καὶ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν;<sup>375</sup>

In fact one of the grounds for the strong distrust of imitative art as a “way” -ὥς (see below **b**), **i**))- of telling any story is that right actions as well as wrong actions are equally performed. In this way the future guardians either as poets and/or actors or as the audience of these performers may acquire inappropriate character traits.

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process: how culture is formed through the kinds of individuals who constitute the society (pp. 190 ff.).

<sup>374</sup> “We don’t allow them [i.e. the young guardians] to be free until we have established a regime in them, as in a city. We use the best element in us to care for the best element in the child, and we give him a guardian and ruler similar to our own. Only then do we give him his freedom.” (9.590e1-591a3).

<sup>375</sup> “Or have you never noticed how imitation, if long continued from an early age, turns into habits and nature –of body, speech and mind?” (Griffith’s translation slightly modified: φύσις = “nature” instead of “dispositions”; I add “or” = ἢ).

## b) ὥς λεκτέον

As for “how” the stories are told, μουσική is again mainly directed towards the development of the love of wisdom of the rational part. However, the development of the rational part also includes consideration of how the ways of telling a story can promote or fail to promote emotions, appetites and other aspects of the soul that normally enfeeble reason. When the imitator ‘copies’ these experiences, these images weaken reason even more because of their inferior metaphysical level, as is argued especially in Book 10. Because of imitation’s bad effects on reason, narration is preferred as the way of telling a story. The reason for rejecting the imitative art and for keeping narration can be summarized as follows: i) Imitative art promotes diversity, which is considered dangerous because it is against the principle of specialization (3.394d). In other words, as imitation is normally of diverse things, the imitator and, as a consequence, his audience -the young guardians- may reproduce inappropriate patterns in their lives and acquire undesirable, vicious habits (3.396a). However, according to this principle imitation of the best characters -“people who are brave, self-disciplined, god-fearing, free” (3.395c; see also 3.396c-d)- is admitted (preferably mixed with narration). Differently from the imitative art, narration avoids the actual performance of behaviour that can be wrong or just unsuitable for the guardians -narrations may just tell about but not ‘act out’ these inappropriate actions- and, in this way, preserves both the poet and his audience. ii) Besides this, as we have seen, in Book 10 a standard imitator (i.e. one who is not a philosopher) has neither knowledge nor, even, correct opinion (10.601e-602a) and, for this reason, he produces third grade versions of reality (10.598e-599a), so that he nourishes the rational part with fakes and appearances (10.596e; 10.597a; 10.598b; 10.599b; 10.600e), and not with the truth. In fact imitation connects the souls of the audience with copies of what is base in the soul (such as deceptive perceptions (10.602c), overdeveloped emotions (10.606a-c) and appetites (10.606d)), so that the rational part in its proper function of calculating, arguing and measuring is enfeebled. For this reason only poetry that celebrates the gods and good men (10.607a) and so produces “images of true virtue” (10.606e) is admitted. In this case the real poet apparently

would need to be also a philosopher and know the Good in order to produce exclusively the right kinds of imitations.<sup>376</sup>

### c) ἀρμονίαι καὶ ῥύθμοι

The kind of attunements and rhythms that are used (3.398e-399a) also have an important role in the education of the love of wisdom in the direction of what is good and beautiful. In fact, it is even claimed that they can have a stronger effect on the soul than the rest of μουσική, insofar as the harmony that this education brings with it (when it is the appropriate one) creates a natural familiarity with the beautiful and the good and a spontaneous rejection of the bad and ugly, although a reflective comprehension of what has been learnt is not yet possible:

ἄρ' οὖν...τούτων ἔνεκα κυριωτάτη ἐν μουσικῇ τροφή, ὅτι μάλιστα καταδύεται εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ὃ τε ῥυθμὸς καὶ ἀρμονία, καὶ ἔρρωμενέστατα ἄπτεται αὐτῆς φέροντα τὴν εὐσχημοσύνην, καὶ ποιεῖ εὐσχήμονα, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς τραφῇ, εἰ δὲ μή, τοῦναντίον; καὶ ὅτι αὐτῶν παραλειπομένων καὶ μὴ καλῶς δημιουργηθέντων ἢ μὴ καλῶς φύντων ὀξύτατ' ἂν αἰσθάνοιτο ὁ ἐκεῖ τραφεὶς ὡς ἔδει, καὶ ὀρθῶς δὴ δυσχεραίνων τὰ μὲν καλὰ ἐπαινοῖ καὶ χαίρων καὶ καταδεχόμενος εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν τρέφοιτ' ἂν ἅπ' αὐτῶν καὶ γίγνοιτο καλὸς τε καὶ ἀγαθός, τὰ δ' αἰσχροῦ ψέγοι τ' ἂν ὀρθῶς καὶ μισοῖ ἔτι νέος ὢν, πρὶν λόγον δυνατὸς εἶναι λαβεῖν, ἐλθόντος δὲ τοῦ λόγου ἀσπάζοιτ' ἂν αὐτὸν γνωρίζων δι' οἰκειότητα μάλιστα ὁ οὕτω τραφεὶς;<sup>377</sup>

<sup>376</sup> On this point see Rowe (1997), pp. 443-447.

<sup>377</sup> "Aren't these two reasons [...] why musical and poetic education is so important? Firstly because rhythm and mode penetrate more deeply into the inner soul than anything else does; they have the most powerful effect on it, since they bring gracefulness with them. They make a person graceful, if he is rightly brought up, and the opposite, if he is not. And secondly because anyone with the right kind of education in this area will have the clearest perception of things that are unsatisfactory –things that are badly made or naturally defective. Being quite rightly disgusted with

The selection of the musical modes and rhythms presupposes that there is a correspondence between the structure of certain states of the soul and the modes and rhythms.<sup>378</sup> For this reason only the Dorian and Phrygian modes (3.399c) are kept because they “best imitate the voices of the prudent and of the brave in failure and success”, either in times of adversity (Dorian mode) or in the periods of peace (Phrygian mode). The Ionian, Lydian and Mixolydian modes are rejected (3.398d-399c) because their harmonies reproduce patterns of emotional states like mourning and lamentations and luxury and laziness (3.398d-399c), i.e. feelings that, when overdeveloped, block and even destroy the proper use of reason. According to this same criterion some instruments are discarded (the reed-pipe, i.e. the instrument of Marsyas) because they can play many modes and are too luxurious (3.399e). Only the lyre and the cithara -instruments of Apollo- are kept because their musical simplicity does not stimulate base elements. Similarly only rhythms that develop refinement are approved, while the rhythms that promote meanness of spirit, arrogance and madness are eliminated (3.400a-d) so that the right βίου ῥύθμοι -the rhythms of a self-disciplined and courageous (κόσμιος καὶ ἀνδρεῖος) person- are admitted.

### 1.2.2. Avoidance of diversity and contact with unchangeableness

The avoidance of diversity (ποικιλία), which is present in the rejection of imitation, and the preference for modes (3.397b-c) and rhythms with slight variations (3.397b-c; 3.399e) and for instruments that play few modes (like the lyre and the cithara 3.399e) is related not only to the principle of specialization (the guardians have to be guardians and nothing else, the traders traders and so on), which has an essential role

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them, he will praise what is beautiful and fine. Delighting in it and receiving it in his soul, he will feed on it and so become noble and good. What is ugly he (i.e. the young guardian) will rightly condemn and hate, even before he is old enough for rational thought. And when rationality does make its appearance, won't the person who has been brought up in this way recognise it because of its familiarity, and be particularly delighted with it?" (3.401d5-402a4). See also 4.424c.

<sup>378</sup> For Plato there is “a real connexion between modes of music and modes of feeling” (Shorey, (1946) [1930], vol. 1, p. 398, n.b). In fact, his argument supposes that feelings and musical modes and rhythms can have a similar structure.

in the argument of Books 2, 3 and 4. The rejection of diversity and the preference for simplicity also seems to imply the idea that uniformity helps the soul to connect with the unchangeable (which is related to what is true) while diversity puts the soul in contact with the changeable (which stimulates the base elements in us and is related to appearances and falsehood). Musical diversity encourages diversity in the soul and this is not suitable especially for an appropriate development of the rational part.<sup>379</sup> But the need to connect the soul only with the unchangeable -as far as possible- and not with the changeable can be made explicit only when the major metaphysical and epistemological points -about what is truly real and how this can be known- have been developed in Books 6 and 7. The rejection of the representation of strong emotions and appetites in stories seems also to be related to the fact that these experiences promote undesirable change in the soul (for example, laughter is rejected for being “a violent agent of change” (3.388e-389a)).

### **1.2.3. Familiarity with the beautiful and the good: recognition of beautiful bodies and souls and of beautiful habits, pursuits and virtues**

As is explained through the comparison of the young guardian with a well-bred dog, the love of wisdom -which is the desire that is proper to the rational part- recognizes what is familiar and is to be welcomed and what is unfamiliar and is to be rejected exclusively through knowledge of the first and ignorance of the second (καίτοι πῶς οὐκ ἂν φιλομαθὲς εἴη συνέσει τε καὶ ἀγνοίᾳ ὀριζόμενον τό τε οἰκεῖον καὶ τὸ ἀλλότριον; (2.376b4-6))<sup>380</sup>. In the case of love of wisdom τό τε οἰκεῖον would be the beautiful and the good and τὸ ἀλλότριον would be its opposite, insofar as the main purpose of artistic education, in a general way, is precisely that all kinds of production or creation -not only poetry- have to be of what is beautiful and harmonious so that, through contact with these kinds of products, the young

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<sup>379</sup> For the value of uniformity in the case of the divine and, by extension, of the soul see 2.380d-381a.

<sup>380</sup> “How, I ask you, can the love of learning be denied to a creature whose criterion of the friendly and the alien is intelligence and ignorance?” (I follow here Shorey’s translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith’s translation).



guardians are guided without their noticing it to “resemblance, friendship, and harmony with the beauty of reason” (εἰς ὁμοιότητά τε καὶ φιλίαν καὶ συμφωνίαν τῷ καλῷ λόγῳ, 3.401d1-3) and learn through experience to recognize the good and the beautiful (3.401b1-d3) and become familiar with it.

The acquaintance of the true musician -the educator and the young guardian who has completed his/her first education (3.402c1-2)- with what is graceful, beautiful and good makes him or her able to prefer persons with beautiful souls and, if possible, with beautiful bodies (3.402d)<sup>381</sup> and to dismiss sexual intercourse with the beloved (3.403a-b). At the same time the true musician is also able to recognize the “forms” or “kinds” -εἶδη- of virtues such as soberness, courage, liberality and high-mindedness (402c),<sup>382</sup> thanks to the fact that he has not been in contact with representations of an evil character or of licentiousness and illiberality (3.401b) and so is familiar only with beautiful characters (ἡθῆ) and develops only beautiful pursuits (τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα) that tend to virtue.<sup>383</sup>

In this way, at the end of early education: a) the appetites have been trained to keep within the limits of what is necessary, so that their powerful ‘stream’ is decreased as much as possible and they do not interfere with and weaken reason; b) the ‘spirited’ part has been trained to fight on reason’s side and, in this way, intensifies reason’s ‘current’; c) the rational part of the young guardians has acquired right beliefs but, as

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<sup>381</sup> The beauty of the body is always subordinated to the beauty of the soul (3.403d; 9.591c-d)

<sup>382</sup> I take it that εἶδη does not refer here to the Forms but just means ‘kinds’ or ‘types’ –i.e what is common to the individual cases of virtue that the young guardians have personally experienced. In the case of the educators the recognition of what is common to individual virtuous acts would be based on a comprehension of this experience of particular cases of true virtue in the light of knowledge of the Forms.

<sup>383</sup> See 4.444e4. In the case of a bad artistic education the person acquires bad habits and customs that destroy the virtue in the soul and even in society, as we can see at 3.424d. The similarity of all this section of *Republic* 3 to the first steps of the ladder of love in the *Symposium* was already pointed out by Raven (ch. 9 of Raven (1965), pp.119-130).

yet, in an unreflective way; d) the soul has been in contact as little as possible with diversity and as much as possible with unchangeableness through musical education; this helps the soul to develop only appropriate patterns of character and to acquire affinity with the unchangeable, which is related with what is real and true; e) in general, the love of wisdom has developed familiarity with and an unconscious recognition of what is really good and beautiful and graceful; f) more specifically, the young guardian has learnt to recognize the beauty of bodies and value it only when it is attached to the beauty of souls, to dismiss sexual intercourse, to become familiar with beautiful habits and pursuits and to recognize universal characteristics of virtues in individual instances. From this background the best of the young guardians are ready to start their higher education in mathematics and dialectic. Through it they can acquire knowledge and comprehension of what they have learnt just through experience (3.401e; 3.396a; 3.409a-e).<sup>384</sup> In this way music and poetry end, as they should, “in love and beauty” (3.403c) and reason’s ‘current’ of desire for the truth and the real good may attain its most powerful development.

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<sup>384</sup> While the young guardians must avoid the experience of evil, they will acquire as dialecticians knowledge of both what is good and what is bad. See especially the example of the judge of the ideal city at 3.409a-e: the future judges of the ideal state have to have only experiences of the good in their childhood and, afterwards, in their adulthood, acquire knowledge –not experience– of the good and the bad.

## **2. Higher education**

**The development of reason's desire for the truth and the real good:**

**being a lover of truth and a just man.**

**Successful fulfilment of the desires of the other parts of the soul and the city.**

### **Introduction**

The programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectics is aimed at making a person develop as a lover of truth in a maximum way, i.e. to make reason's 'stream' towards the truth and the real good as powerful within him as possible, so that he achieves the utmost unfolding of his essential rational condition and, alongside it, an internal state of justice through which each of the parts of the soul achieves its perfection (wisdom, bravery and moderation) and their desires are successfully satisfied as well (9.586e-587a). In a city governed by just and wise philosophers conforming to this model each of its parts and the society as a whole also attains the maximum perfection possible. In this way each human being gets as close as possible to the satisfaction of the universal desire for the real good, which is proper to our rational part.

Earlier education has appropriately trained the desires of the irrational parts, so that they do not block and/or corrupt reason; it has also specifically stimulated love of wisdom within the soul through musical education. This first education starts the development of a certain capacity for abstraction as well, insofar as it makes the person able to recognize the "forms" or "kinds" -εἶδη- of virtues (3.402c), since the young guardians have not been in contact with representations of an evil character (3.401b) and have developed good characters (ἡθῆ) and devoted themselves to beautiful pursuits (τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα) that predispose them to virtue (4.444e4-5). Thus, earlier education creates the circumstances to enable such a development of reason's desire for the truth and the real good through the programme of higher education. At the same time this higher education provides a basis for and perfects the results of earlier education.

The first target of higher education is to provoke in the soul a radical transformation –expressed through the metaphorical expression of “turning round” (περιστροφή and περιαγωγή, 7.521c) the soul “upwards” (ἐπάνοδος) (7.521c)- so that the world of generation is left behind and the soul is aimed at the truth (7.525c), i.e. at the Form of the Good (7.526e). In this way the capacity of the soul for ‘seeing’ the intelligible starts to be developed (7.518d) and reason trains itself to consider things on its own so that its essential desire to search for truth is manifested. In other words, if we take concepts developed at the end of Book 5, the programme of higher education is an attempt to make young guardians lovers of the truth, φιλοσόφοι so that they do not stay attached to sensible particulars, as the “lovers of the opinions” or φιλοδόξοι (5.480a) do, but believe (νομίζειν) in the Forms, for example, in beauty itself, and are “able to follow when someone tries to guide him to the knowledge of it” (5.476c).

For this “turning” the person is exposed not to sensations from which adequate judgements can be made but to perceptual experiences that contradict her/his reasoning. In this way he/she is led to admit the existence of, and to think and reflect on, something that is different from what is multiple and sense-perceptible and is in itself, unchangeable and knowable only through the intellect (7.524c), and to desire to go further in this new comprehension of reality.

The image of the line and the allegory of the cave give a detailed description of the successive ‘upward’ steps of the philosopher -εἰκασία, πίστις, διάνοια and νοῦς- towards his object of desire (i.e. the truth that consists in knowing the Good or at any rate a principle which does not require further foundations). If the person is able to keep going, he/she ideally moves to the highest level of ἐπιστήμη -νοῦς- and ascertains the goal of his studies and of life itself: knowledge of what each thing is in itself, its relation to the rest of the things that are in themselves and, above all, the foundation of everything in the Form of the Good, as the very last principle of

reality, knowledge and justice. So with the knowledge of the Good the philosopher-rulers simultaneously attain -in case this knowledge were possible for anybody- reason's essential object of desire: i.e. truth, what is absolutely real and what is really good. As a consequence of this knowledge, the other parts of the soul -and of the city- also achieve a real fulfilment of their desires, as far as possible, and alongside it, individual and social justice and the virtues that justice brings with it are attained.

Thus, our whole life, not just our rational capacities, depends on how much we develop the love of wisdom of our rational aspect -for the development of which our other sources of motivation have also to be appropriately trained in early childhood. In this way, if we imagine ourselves deprived of our corporeal existence and put in the perspective of eternity and of the order of the universe, as in the picture of the eschatological myth, we are for the whole eternity either rational, god-like creatures who have developed their love for the truth as much as possible or human beings who have missed their chance of revealing their essential rational condition.

### **2.1. Turning the soul ‘upwards’ for the development of reason’s desire for the truth and the real good: deceptive perceptions as triggers for the awakening of calculating reason**

We all desire to possess the real good and not the appearance of it (ἀγαθὰ δὲ οὐδενὶ ἔτι ἀρκεῖ τὰ δοκοῦντα κτᾶσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὰ ὄντα ζητοῦσιν, 6.505d7-8) and do all that we do in the pursuit of it (ὁ δὲ διώκει μὲν ἅπαντα ψυχὴ καὶ τούτου ἕνεκα πάντα πράττει, 6.505d11-e1). However, most of us fail in this commitment because of lack of sufficient understanding about what is really good (ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς τί ποτ’ ἐστὶν, 6.505e1-2). In other words, the attainment of the real good and the truth that we all desire requires a special training of our rational part, which is the possessor of this desire. When reason progressively learns to consider things in themselves – independently of sense experience- and eventually reaches knowledge of the Form of the Good and an understanding of reality based on it, the attainment of the real good that we all desire becomes, at least partially, possible.

Earlier education has trained the irrational desires so that they do not block and corrupt reason’s desire for the truth and the real good and, in this way, paves the way for higher education (see especially 7.519a-b). Moreover the young guardians have grown up in contact only with real beautiful and good instances (3.401a-e) and have learnt only true beliefs, which include, for example, beliefs about what is to be feared and dared and about the immutable and identical nature of the divine.<sup>385</sup> Insofar as knowledge -i.e. what higher education promotes- aims at objects such as numbers and Forms which are in their essence unchangeable, the development of the soul’s affinity with the unchangeable rather than with the changeable during earlier education also helps in the process of higher education and, in this way, prepares reason for the development of its essential capacities and desires. Moreover, like true musicians, who have been in contact only with examples of good character (3.401b)

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<sup>385</sup> See Chapter 2, Section III, 1.2.1. a) & λεκτέον, pp. 206 ff..

and so develop beautiful pursuits (τὰ ... καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα) that tend to virtue (4.444e4-5), the young guardians start to develop a certain capacity for abstraction through recognizing the “forms” or “kinds” -εἶδη- of virtues (3.402c). All these things contribute to starting to separate the young guardian’s souls, as much as possible, from the sensible world and put them on course for wisdom and the real good. Thus, as said at 6.485d3-4, they have been educated from earlier childhood in order to become lovers of the truth:

τὸν ἄρα τῷ ὄντι φιλομαθῇ πάσης ἀληθείας δεῖ εὐθὺς ἐκ νέου ὅτι μάλιστα ὀρέγεσθαι.<sup>386</sup>

The higher education tries to do the rest of the work.

The first step of the programme of higher education is to turn the soul ‘upwards’ in the direction of the true ‘light’ of real philosophy<sup>387</sup> or, in other words, a conversion of the soul from the world of generation towards what is true (αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς ῥασιώνης μεταστροφή ἀπὸ γενέσεως ἐπ’ ἀλήθειάν τε καὶ οὐσίαν, 7.525c5-6), towards the Form of the Good (τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέαν, 7.526e1).

For this turning of the soul reason has to learn to consider things themselves, independently from the senses. Triggers that provoke in us this kind of thought (τὰ μὲν παρακλητικὰ τῆς διανοίας, 7.524d2-3; see also 7.523a ff.) are certain kinds of perceptions, such as distant appearances and illusory painting (τὰ

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<sup>386</sup> “The genuine lover of learning, then, must make every possible effort, right from earliest childhood, to reach out for truth of every kind”.

<sup>387</sup> See on this point 7.521c6-8: ... ψυχῆς περιαγωγή ἐκ νυκτερινῆς τινος ἡμέρας εἰς ἀληθινήν, τοῦ ὄντος οὖσαν ἐπάνοδον, ἣν δὴ φιλοσοφίαν ἀληθὴ φήσομεν εἶναι. (“...the turning of a soul away from that day which is a kind of night, and towards the true day which is the ascent to what is, and which we shall say is true philosophy.”)

πόρρωθεν ...φαινόμενα ...καὶ τὰ ἐσκιαγραφημένα, 7.523b5-6)<sup>388</sup> and perceptions of the smallness and bigness, thickness and thinness, softness and hardness that physical objects possess (7.523e-524a1). This kind of perception “demands examination by the understanding, since perception produces no sound result” (τὰ δὲ παντάπασι διακελευόμενα ἐκείνην [i.e. τὴν νόησιν] ἐπισκέψασθαι, ὡς τῆς αἰσθήσεως οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς ποιούσης, 7.523b2-4); when we base our judgements on them, one thing and its opposite can equally be concluded. As we read at 7.524b ff., for example, according to the senses something can be bigger in relation to one thing but smaller in relation to another. Because of this contradictory situation reason is obliged to examine things by itself so that it establishes, in this case, the great and the small, which for the senses appear confused, as different and separate entities. In this way questions such as τί οὖν ποτ’ ἐστὶ τὸ μέγα αὖ καὶ τὸ σμικρόν awake in the soul (7.524c11) and, alongside it, a first comprehension of an intelligible dimension in reality (τὸ μὲν νοητόν) different from the visible one (τὸ δ’ ὁρατόν) takes place (7.524c13) so that the rational part of the soul is directed towards searching for what we all desire: the real good and the truth.

## **2.2. The upward “conversion” of the soul according to the end of Book 5: being a philosopher or lover of truth and the real good**

People who have gone through this “conversion” have awakened reason’s universal desire for the real good and truth in their souls and so become philosophers or lovers of the truth. In other words, using the words of the end of Book 5, they are people

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<sup>388</sup> Similarly at *Phaed.* 72e-77a in the argument from recollection sense-perceptions play a positive role as a trigger for a pure rational examination. However, permanent contact with this kind of experiences without training reason to examine them and to abandon them as false destroys reason’s capacity according to Book 10. In fact one of the main reasons for rejecting the mimetic art is that it exposes the soul to this kind of sense experiences without the antidote of real knowledge. See above **Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3.2.** τῶν φαύλων τι ἐν ἡμῖν in *Republic* 10, pp. 186 ff..



who believe (νομίζειν) in the Forms, for example, in beauty itself, and are “able to follow when someone tries to guide him to the knowledge of it”,<sup>389</sup> so that they would be able to distinguish beauty itself from the things that participate in it and vice versa<sup>390</sup> and so “to approach to beauty itself and contemplate it in and by itself” (5.476c). Thus, they are no longer like the majority of φιλοδόξοι,<sup>391</sup> who stay attached to sensible particulars (e.g. the lovers of beautiful sounds and sights who remain on attached to “beautiful sounds and colours and shapes, and to everything which is created from these elements, but whose minds are incapable of seeing, and taking pleasure in, the nature of beauty itself” (5.476b)).<sup>392</sup> They are in love with the spectacle of the truth (5.475e) and “hungry” for wisdom and knowledge as a whole (5.474c; 475c). Thus, it is possible to speculate, though it is not asserted in the text, that they have moved from opinion (δόξα), which is the general intermediate state (μεταξύ) between ignorance (ἀγνοία) and knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), to a new intermediate state –φιλοσοφία.

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<sup>389</sup> In opposition to the a lover of beautiful sounds and sights, who is ...ὁ... αὐτὸ δὲ κάλλος μήτε νομίζων μήτε, ἂν τις ἡγήται ἐπὶ τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτοῦ, δυνάμενος ἔπεσθαι.... (“...[who] cannot recognise beauty itself, and cannot follow if you direct him to knowledge of it.”) (5.476c2-4).

<sup>390</sup> τί δέ; ὁ τὰναντία τούτων ἡγούμενός τέ τι αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ δυνάμενος καθορᾶν καὶ αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα, καὶ οὔτε τὰ μετέχοντα αὐτὸ οὔτε αὐτὸ τὰ μετέχοντα ἡγούμενος... (“What about the person who is just the opposite, who believes in beauty itself, who can look both at it and at the things which share in it without mistaking them for it or it for them?”) (5.476c9-d3).

<sup>391</sup> 6.480a.

<sup>392</sup> οἱ μὲν που [...] φιλήκοοι καὶ φιλοθεάμονες τὰς τε καλὰς φωνὰς ἀσπάζονται καὶ χροᾶς καὶ σχήματα καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων δημιουργούμενα, αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ καλοῦ ἀδύνατος αὐτῶν ἡ διάνοια τὴν φύσιν ἰδεῖν τε καὶ ἀσπᾶσθαι. “Well, I imagine that audiences and spectators can take pleasure in beautiful sounds and colours and shapes, and in everything which is created from these elements, but that their minds are incapable of seeing, and taking pleasure in, the nature of beauty itself.” (5.476b4-8).

The state of mind of the philosophers is, like any other person's, an intermediate state (μεταξύ) between knowledge and ignorance, since they do not have knowledge – being just lovers of the truth; but, at the same time they are beginning to move from the regular state of δόξα, having acquired a relevant true conviction that the lovers of opinions do not have: the belief that the Forms exist and are the objects of knowledge.<sup>393</sup> In this way they look for wisdom, leaving behind any understanding based just on sensible particulars. From the point of view of its aspiration this state of mind is φιλο-σοφία or “desire/love for the truth”; as the *Symposium* may perhaps allow us to suppose, philosophy, from the point of view of its cognitive contents, could also be described as ὀρθὴ δόξα as well.<sup>394</sup> For being in such a state of mind, the crucial thing is that, by believing and yearning for the Forms, a process of searching for the truth has started. The philosopher's strong passion for the truth and the real good is what keeps him going in his struggle to knowledge of what really is:

ἀρ' οὖν δὴ οὐ μετρίως ἀπολογησόμεθα ὅτι πρὸς τὸ ὄν πεφυκὼς εἶη ἀμιλλᾶσθαι ὃ γε ὄντως φιλομαθής, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιμένοιν ἐπὶ τοῖς δοξαζομένοις εἶναι πολλοῖς ἐκάστοις, ἀλλ' ἴοι καὶ οὐκ ἀμβλύνοντο οὐδ' ἀπολήγοι τοῦ ἔρωτος, πρὶν αὐτοῦ ὃ ἔστιν ἐκάστου τῆς φύσεως ἄψασθαι ᾧ προσήκει ψυχῆς ἐφάπτεσθαι τοῦ τοιούτου - προσήκει δὲ συγγενεῖ - ᾧ πλησιάσας καὶ μιγεῖς τῷ ὄντι ὄντως, γεννήσας νοῦν καὶ ἀλήθειαν, γνοίη τε καὶ ἀληθῶς ζῶη καὶ τρέφοιτο καὶ οὕτω λήγοι ὠδίνος, πρὶν δ' οὐ;<sup>395</sup>

<sup>393</sup> That is why at *Symp.* 201d-204b the philosophical ἔρως is not just ‘intermediate’ but ‘intermediary’ in relation to the divine world of wisdom.

<sup>394</sup> See *Symp.* 202a; also Rowe (2001), Sier (1997), pp. 66-67 and here **Chapter I, 3.2.1.4, a) Eros** is μεταξύ like ὀρθὴ δόξα (202a1-10), pp. 52 ff..

<sup>395</sup> “Wouldn't be reasonable for us to defend him by saying that it was, after all the nature of the true lover of learning to keep struggling towards what is, and that he did not waste time on what opinion sees, in each case, as many? Never losing his edge, never abandoning his passion, he kept on going until he had grasped the nature of what each thing itself is with that part of his soul –the

Ideally φιλοσοφία would lead to the completion of this process, i.e. σοφία. However, it is hard to say that Plato envisages the state of full wisdom as possible in absolute terms: he rather seems to conceive it as an aspiration that we can try to fulfil as far as possible in our actual existence. Thus, the philosophers, like everyone else, remain in an intermediate state (μεταξύ) between ignorance and knowledge as well. However, the crucial difference is that from an initial philosophical state it is possible to start 'upward' on the dialectical path, while the standard state of δόξα keeps people attached to sense-perceptions in such a way that they do not look for a better understanding. The whole dialectical, synoptic view as the maximum expression of knowledge, often attributed only to the gods,<sup>396</sup> is, probably, more an aspiration than a real possibility, at least in our lifetimes, in which we cannot completely separate ourselves from the bodily and from our temporal limitations. Philosophers may obtain just provisional results, and in that sense themselves never go beyond what would still be an intermediate state in relation to knowledge. Nevertheless, they would have the advantage of having developed reason's desire for the truth and the real good as far as possible and with it the essential rational nature of their souls.

The successive steps of the philosopher's ascent to his object of desire -the truth and the Good- are described through the images of the line and the cave. The programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectics is planned in order to take him through these steps so that reason's desire of wisdom will attain its maximum development.

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part akin to it- which is equipped to grasp this kind of thing. And it was only when he used this part of his soul to get close to and be intimate with what really is, so engendering understanding and truth, that he found knowledge, true life, nourishment, and relief from the pains of the soul's childbirth?" (6.490a8-b7).

<sup>396</sup> See Rowe (2001).

## 2.3. Maximum development of reason's 'stream' through the programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectic: being a fully-developed philosopher or lover of the truth<sup>397</sup>

### 2.3.1. From εἰκασία to πίστις at the stage of δόξα

In order to start their journey towards the truth and to develop their rationality and love for the truth, the future philosopher-rulers have to move to a higher level of opinion -“conviction” or πίστις-, leaving behind the state of “imagination” or εἰκασία, in which comprehension is based on images (εἰκόνες, φαντάσματα) of sensible things (6.510a; 6.511e; 7.534a) with no discrimination between images of sense-perceptible objects and sense-perceptible objects themselves (7.515b). Thus, the embryonic rulers get an understanding that comes to be based on the sense-perceptible objects themselves and not on their images (6.510a; 6.511e; 7.534a) and, above all, they are able to distinguish sense-perceptible objects from their images (7.515c-d).<sup>398</sup> The fact that in the guardian's musical education the use of μίμησις has been proscribed (or allowed exceptionally, i.e. where the imitator reproduces good characters)<sup>399</sup> might help them not to confuse sense-perceptible objects with their images. They also have the additional benefit that they have grown up acquiring only right and true beliefs, since they have been surrounded only by examples of real beauty and goodness, and familiarity with the unchangeable (3.403). Moreover, their irrational sources of motivation have been trained so that they are not an obstacle to reason's further development (7.519b). In addition, by being familiar only with beautiful characters and pursuits (ἡθῆ καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα), they have acquired an

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<sup>397</sup> What follows is a recapitulation of certain arguments of Books 6 and 7 which might be familiar to readers but, nevertheless, remain essential to my overall argument, as I try to show in the 'Conclusions' in **Chapter 3**.

<sup>398</sup> Fine (1991), p.103.

<sup>399</sup> In earlier education narration is preferred to imitation. See above **Chapter 2, Section III, 1.2**.

**b)** ὥς λεκτέον, p. 208.

embryonic capacity of abstraction in order to recognize the “forms” or “kinds” -εἶδη- of virtues (402c2 ff.).

### 2.3.2. The ‘conversion’ of the soul: reason’s desire for the truth and the real good

#### 2.3.2.1. The shift to διάνοια: turning the soul ‘upwards’ through an appropriate study of the beautiful mathematical sciences

However, the real “conversion” of the soul starts, as we have seen above in *Section III 2.2.*, through the full development of reason’s capacity to consider things independently from perceptual experiences (7.526a-b). This conversion initially occurs and is developed through the practice of the mathematical sciences -arithmetic (7.522c-526c), geometry (7.526c-527c), stereometry (7.528b-d), astronomy (7.527d-528a; 7.528e-530c) and harmonics (7.530d-531c)- for a long period of time (7.537b-d) and in the right way, that is in a way that helps the soul in its search for what is beautiful and good (7.531c).<sup>400</sup> Arithmetic, for example, if well used, develops understanding (7.523a1-3)<sup>401</sup> and helps in the ‘upward’ conversion of the soul ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ὄντος θεάν (7.525a1-2), insofar as the discussion is περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἀριθμῶν, (7.525d6<sup>402</sup>) and not about their visible and tangible representations.

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<sup>400</sup> There are warnings against inappropriate use of each of these mathematical sciences (see 7.525d in relation to arithmetic’s; 7.527a in relation to geometry; 7.528b-c in relation to stereometry; 7.529c-530c in relation to astronomy; 7.531a in relation to harmonics). This means that these sciences are not useful by themselves for becoming a dialectician: an appropriate method of developing them is required.

<sup>401</sup> κινδυνεύει τῶν πρὸς τὴν νόησιν ἀγόντων φύσει εἶναι ὧν ζητοῦμεν, χρῆσθαι δ’ οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ ὀρθῶς, ἐλκτικῷ ὄντι παντάπασιν πρὸς οὐσίαν. (“It may well be that it is one of the studies we are looking for and that its natural tendency is to lead us towards understanding, but that no one makes the right use of it as the perfect instrument for drawing them towards being.”)

<sup>402</sup> The objects of study of the mathematical sciences are, as I take it, not Forms: although they are unchangeable like the Forms (and for this reason these studies train reason for the future development in dialectic), they are multiple.

Through these beautiful sciences the person trains himself/herself to distinguish what is unchangeable and common to multiple cases from what is changeable and multiple and to reason about these unchangeable entities so that the soul is purified and becomes sighted (7.527d) and the foundations of the rest of the arts (τέχναι) that deal with the world of generation (7.533c) are known (7.522c). The person trained in this way may finally get a comprehension of the unity, kinship and affinities of all these sciences (ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλλήλων κοινωνίαν ἀφίκεται καὶ συγγένειαν, καὶ συλλογισθῇ ταῦτα ἢ ἐστὶν ἀλλήλοις οἰκεῖα, 7.531d1-3) and, as in the case of real astronomy, of a beauty different from and superior to the perfect but visible beauty of the skies (7.529c-d). This inferior kind of ἐπιστήμη is called “understanding” or διάνοια (6.511e; 7.534a) and has the limitations of still using sensible representations in order to reason and just getting conclusions from its principles without speculation about the foundations of the principles used (6.510b-511a1). However, in spite of its limitation, this training helps to fortify reason’s ‘stream’ towards the truth and the real good, which is the goal of the highest science of all: dialectic

...ὥσπερ θριγκὸς τοῖς μαθήμασιν ἡ διαλεκτικὴ ἡμῖν ἐπάνω κεῖσθαι, καὶ οὐκέτ’ ἄλλο τούτου μάθημα ἀνωτέρω ὀρθῶς ἂν ἐπιτίθεσθαι....<sup>403</sup>

#### **2.3.2.2. From διάνοια to νοῦς: panoptic understanding of reality with foundations on the Form of the Good**

After this long training in mathematical sciences, the future philosophers are ready to move to a higher level of ἐπιστήμη: “intelligence” or νοῦς. In this mental state, if it is possible for any human being, the supreme science (μέγιστον μάθημα, 6.504e4-5; see also 6.504d), which is the science of the Good (6.505a2) may be acquired, a science which, in its maximum development, consists in a panoptic view

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<sup>403</sup> “... dialectic sits as a kind of coping-stone on the top of our educational edifice, and [...] there is no other subject left which we’d be justified in putting on top of it...” (7.534e2-4).

of the interrelation between the essences of the things based on the Form of the Good (7.532a-b; 7.534c). At this stage the mind operates without any sensible representation and, above all, gives up all assumptions and moves towards a principle that does not require further foundations: i.e., apparently, the Form of the Good (6.510b; 6.511b; 7.533c-d).

The Form of the Good is the principle simultaneously of reality, knowledge and justice. As the image of the sun and the allegory of the cavern show, the Good, which is the goal of the dialectical studies of the guardians, is the ultimate ἀρχή in three senses: it is epistemological cause –i.e. the Good is that through which things, more specifically intelligible things, are really known and understood, and that which makes them true (6.508d-e); it is metaphysical cause –i.e. the Good is that by which things exist (καὶ τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν ὑπ’ ἐκείνου [i.e. ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ] αὐτοῖς προσεῖναι, 6.509b7-8); and it is ethical foundation –i.e. the Good is the basis of all virtues and the real good that all of us desire (6.504d-505a). So with the knowledge of the Good the philosopher-rulers simultaneously attain –in case this knowledge were possible for anybody– truth, what is absolutely real and what is really good. With the contemplation of the Good the reality of Beauty and Justice is simultaneously ‘seen’ (7.520c), the Good exceeding in beauty even knowledge and the truth (6.509a). In this way reason’s ‘stream’ of desire towards the truth has attained its maximum strength and development.

#### **2.4. Coincidence of the just man and the lover of the truth: the attainment of maximum satisfaction in our life as a whole through the development of reason’s ‘stream’ towards the truth and the Good<sup>404</sup>**

Through a posited attainment of knowledge of the Good not only is a maximum development of reason’s ‘stream’ and its desire for the truth achieved: alongside it, the whole soul and its parts get the best satisfaction possible of their desires as well

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<sup>404</sup> At 9.590d-592a the man whose life is led by love for the truth and the just man clearly coincide. See also 5.472a1-7, 5.473c6-e5, 5.474b-c, 6.484a-485a and Fine (1991), p. 87; differently Annas (1981), ch. 13, pp. 321-334.

as perfection in the form of individual justice and the virtues that justice implies (wisdom about what is good for the individual, moderation and bravery). At the same time, these lovers of the truth, these just individuals, are also the ones who, having knowledge of what is good for the city from the point of view of what is Good in general, can eventually bring social justice to the city and satisfy the desires of the different parts of the city as far as possible.<sup>405</sup>

#### 2.4.1. Foundations of the individual and social good on the Good

The just man is a person within whom each part of the soul performs its own task (4.441d-e). The task of the rational part is to govern the soul since it is the part of us that is able to acquire knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of what is appropriate for each part of the soul and for the individual as a whole:

σοφὸν δὲ γε ἐκείνῳ τῷ σμικρῷ μέρει, τῷ ὃ ἡρχέν τ' ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ταῦτα παρήγγελλεν, ἔχον αὖ κἀκεῖνο ἐπιστήμην ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν τοῦ συμφέροντος ἐκάστω τε καὶ ὅλῳ τῷ κοινῷ σφῶν αὐτῶν τριῶν ὄντων.<sup>406</sup>

Similarly, a just city is the one in which each class performs its own task. In consequence the class of the individuals who possess the knowledge of what is good for each class and for the city as a whole is the class that has to rule.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Thus, although the metaphysical knowledge attained by the guardians is based on a 'pure' *a-priori*-speculation, this does not mean that it is not applicable to sensible/concrete reality: the proof of this is that the philosophers, when they are obliged reluctantly (7.517c-d) to go back to the cave (7.519d; 7.540a), are the people who can much better judge about the sensible world by distinguishing "shadows" from "real objects" (7.520c). Moreover, in order to keep them appropriately trained in this respect, they are sent to do concrete tasks (such as to hold commands in war) after part of their dialectical training, so that they do not lack this kind of experience (7.539e).

<sup>406</sup> "But wise by that small part that ruled in him and handed down these commands, by its possession in turn within it of the knowledge of what is beneficial for each and for the whole, the community composed of the three." (4.442c5-8). I follow here Shorey's translation. Henceforth I will continue by following Griffith's translation.



τῷ σμικροτάτῳ ἄρα ἔθνει καὶ μέρει ἑαυτῆς καὶ τῇ ἐν τούτῳ ἐπιστήμῃ, τῷ προεστῶτι καὶ ἄρχοντι, ὅλη σοφὴ ἂν εἴη κατὰ φύσιν οἰκισθεῖσα πόλις· καὶ τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικε, φύσει ὀλίγιστον γίγνεται γένος, ᾧ προσήκει ταύτης τῆς ἐπιστήμης μεταλαγχάνειν ἣν μόνην δεῖ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν σοφίαν καλεῖσθαι.<sup>408</sup>

This wisdom or knowledge which is required in order to bring individual and social justice is part of the knowledge of the Good. Thus, at 7.540a5-b1:

...τοὺς διασωθέντας καὶ ἀριστεύσαντας πάντα πάντῃ ἐν ἔργοις τε καὶ ἐπιστήμαις πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἀκτέον, καὶ ἀναγκαστέον ἀνακλίναντας τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς αὐγὴν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀποβλέψαι τὸ πᾶσι φῶς παρέχον, καὶ ἰδόντας τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό, παραδείγματι χρωμένους ἐκείνῳ, καὶ πόλιν καὶ ἰδιώτας καὶ ἑαυτοὺς κοσμεῖν τὸν ἐπίλοιπον βίον ἐν μέρει ἑκάστους....<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Their love for the truth also inhibits the rulers from being lovers of rule (7.521b) and actually they have to be obliged to rule in spite of their natural disposition to spend the rest of their lives in pure thinking on the Forms (7.517c-d; 7.540a-b).

<sup>408</sup> "In which case, the wisdom of a city founded on natural principles depends entirely on its smallest group and element –the leading and ruling element- and the knowledge that the element possesses. The class which can be expected to share in this branch of knowledge, which of all branches of knowledge is the only one we can call wisdom, is by its nature, apparently, the smallest class." (4.428e7-429a3).

<sup>409</sup> "...those who have survived and been completely successful in every sphere, both in practical affairs and in their studies, should now be conducted to the final goal, and required to direct the radiant light of the soul towards the contemplation of that which itself gives light to everything. And when they have seen the good itself, they must make that their model, and spend the rest of their lives, each group in its turn, in governing the city, the individuals in it, and themselves."

#### 2.4.2. Satisfaction and perfection of the desires of the soul as a whole and in its parts through the knowledge of the Good

In other words, as said at 6.504d-505a, a right comprehension of the virtues (justice, courage, moderation and wisdom itself 6.504a) –in the individual as well as in the city- demands their understanding with reference to the Form of the Good:

ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα μέγιστον μάθημα, πολλάκις ἀκήκοας, ἦ δὴ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τᾶλλα προσχρησάμενα χρήσιμα καὶ ὠφέλιμα γίγνεται.<sup>410</sup>

This means that, if reason attains its object of desire (truth, the knowledge of the Good), alongside it, the other parts of the soul and the soul as a whole –and also the city and its different classes- also get appropriate satisfaction of their desires and attain their perfections or ἀρεταί. Thus at 9.586e4-587a1 in relation to the parts of the soul:

τῷ φιλοσόφῳ ἄρα ἐπομένης ἀπάσης τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μὴ στασιαζούσης ἑκάστω τῷ μέρει ὑπάρχει εἰς τε τᾶλλα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν καὶ δικάϊω εἶναι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἑκάστον καὶ τὰς βελτίστας καὶ εἰς τὸ δυνατόν τὰς ἀληθεστάτας καρποῦσθαι.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> “You’ ve often heard me say that the most important branch of study is the form or character of the good –that which just things and anything else must make use of if they are to be useful and beneficial.” (6.505a2-4).

<sup>411</sup> “If the entire soul, then, follows without rebellion the part which loves wisdom, the result is that each part can in general carry out its own functions –can be just, in other words- and in particular each is able to enjoy the pleasures which are its own, and, as far as possible, the truest.”

The rational part's knowledge of the individual good gives perfection to the appetites already trained in early education within the appropriate limits and the virtue of σωφροσύνη fully emerges in the soul. Through reason's knowledge of what is good for the individual the 'spirited' element, which has already been habituated through primary education to work according to reason's right beliefs of what is to be feared and not, reaches perfection as well and the virtue of ἀνδρεία is achieved in full sense.

In other words justice (δικαιοσύνη) implies the rule of the rational part in the individual and of the rational class in the city *through wisdom* (σοφία or ἐπιστήμη). The other two virtues -moderation and courage- also require as necessary condition reason's rule and knowledge: moderation (σωφροσύνη) or the agreement of the three parts to reason's control over the soul (4.442c-d) requires, firstly, the early training of the appetites in their limits to prevent them from interfering reason's work but, afterwards, reason's actual government and knowledge of the individual good. Similarly courage (ἀνδρεία) or the 'spirited' part's endurance through pains and pleasures according to reason's prescriptions of what is to be feared or not (4.442b-c) is based on the appropriate training of the θυμοειδές in early childhood to support reason; but, in order to attain its fulfilment it needs reason's actual control over the soul through the knowledge of what is good for each part and the whole.<sup>412</sup>

Insofar as knowledge of the Good includes not only knowledge of the individual good but also of the common good, in a society governed by the philosopher-rulers each individual (not only the philosopher ruler) would also achieve the maximum development of his desire of the good as far as possible. This is why justice and the virtues attached to it are attained by the city through the government of the wise

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<sup>412</sup> The establishment of all virtues except wisdom requires habit and practice (ἐθεσί καὶ ἀσκήσειν 7.519d) but attains fulfillment only through wisdom: cf. *Phaed.* 68b8-69a5.

philosophers who have the knowledge of the Good. By the fact itself that the city is governed by wise men the society possesses the virtue of 'wisdom' (4.428e-429a). Then there are those who have good dispositions but do not have the capacity for higher education so that they stay as auxiliaries and are governed by a desire for honour and guided by the right beliefs of the rational part. These men and women retain their conception of the things to be feared and dared according to what they learnt in their earlier education and provide the virtue of bravery in the social structure. Moreover, the society as a whole -the multitude as well as the minority that rules- have the appropriate limits imposed on it, their lives being mainly at service of the satisfaction of necessary appetites (and not by useless and especially not by lawless ones) (4.431c-d). In this way the society attains the virtue of 'moderation' as well, so that the best part of the city governs the rest of it and harmony arises in the city (4.432a-b). Social justice is a sort of result from these virtues and consists in each part of the society doing its own work (4.433d).

Thus, the development of reason's 'stream' of desire for the truth and the real good through the programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectic not only makes attainable, as far as possible for a human being, the truth and the real good (reason's objects of desire). It also allows the satisfaction and perfection of the desires of the other parts according to what is really good and in this way of one's own life as a whole. Furthermore, if the city were governed by the philosophers, not only the philosopher-rulers but also the different parts of society and their members would reach the maximum perfection possible to them. In this way, everybody would be as close as possible according to his capacities to the achievement of what we all desire: the real good.

Although with an appropriate training the irrational parts are not an unsurpassable obstacle for reason's search for the truth and the real good, they do, nevertheless, put a limit on a full and permanent achievement of the knowledge of the Good. Only in an after-death existence in which we can imagine ourselves deprived from the 'weight' of our bodily aspects and the parts of the soul associated to it, can we

consider ourselves in absolute terms in the perspective of reason's desire for the truth and in the light of how successful we have been in developing our essential rational condition. This picture is traced through the eschatological myth of Book 10.

***Section IV: The eschatological myth of 'Republic 10': being what we desire  
forever***

**Introduction**

Thus, a life based on wisdom and justice -i.e. a philosophical life ruled by reason's desire for the truth- brings us as close as possible for a human being to the attainment of the real good which is universally desired. In tandem with such an attainment a maximum satisfaction of the desires of the other parts of the soul is also achieved.

Although the main turn of the argument of the *Republic* has been towards proving that this internal state of wisdom and justice has its reward in itself, the argument closes by adding some extra rewards that will come from gods and men in this life. But, above all, through the eschatological myth of Book 10, the possibility of the highest prize of all is envisaged, also deriving from the development of reason's desire for knowledge: the promise for the philosopher of arriving, as closely as possible, to the possession of the real good universally desired in a *post-mortem* existence as well and, in short, for eternity within the framework of the justice of a mathematically ordered universe. Nevertheless, this diachronic, literal reading of the myth is not the only one. An alternative interpretation of the myth is also open to the reader: the portrait here offered of the soul in its discarnate existence and in the light of its rational essence could also be read in a synchronic way such that the promise of an -albeit temporary- attainment of a god-like condition here and now for those who have practiced philosophy would be suggested.

But firstly let us review some preliminary points introduced in Book 10 before considering the eschatological myth.

## 1. Preliminary points to the eschatological myth: everlasting justice and injustice of the soul in the light of its desire for the truth and from the perspective of eternity

In *Republic* 10, after considering the power of mimetic poetry to corrupt our rational part, the immortal condition of the soul is treated in terms of its essential nature and in the light of the development of reason's desire for the truth from the perspective of eternity and lasting effects of its justice or injustice in this life. These treatments together with other new issues are later used for the construction of the eschatological myth.

### 1.1. The perspective on the just or unjust life in the light of eternity

The main aim of the *Republic* is the demonstration of the value of justice in itself, whether other men recognize the just condition of the just person or not and even if the just man has to suffer to be treated unjustly by others. From this pillar is suspended the treatment of several other subjects, such as political theory, the theory of art, education, epistemology, metaphysics, and the psychological theory itself that is our concern. At the end of Book 10 Socrates turns to consider the value of being just not only in the short time of our present existence but also in the light of eternity:

μέγας [...] ὁ ἀγών[...] τὸ χρηστὸν ἢ κακὸν γενέσθαι [...]. καὶ μήν [...] τά γε μέγιστα ἐπίχειρα ἀρετῆς καὶ προκείμενα ἄθλα οὐ διεληλύθαμεν. [...]. τί δ' ἂν [...] ἐν γε ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ μέγα γένοιτο; πᾶς γὰρ οὗτός γε ὁ ἐκ παιδὸς μέχρι πρεσβύτου χρόνος πρὸς πάντα ὀλίγος πού τις ἂν εἴη.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> "A great prize is at stake [...] for being good rather than bad. [...] And that's without even mentioning the greatest of the rewards and prizes which are on offer for virtue. (...) Nothing great can happen in a short space of time .... And presumably, compared with eternity, our whole span of time from childhood to old age is a short space of time". (10.608b4-c7). (Griffith's italics).

Thus the consequences of being just or not according to the extent to which reason's desire for the truth has been developed are now projected not just into our present existence but also into the totality of time.

### 1.2. The everlasting condition of the soul

The representation of the consequences of our deeds from the perspective of eternity presupposes the assumption of the immortality of the soul:

οἶει ἀθανάτῳ πράγματι ὑπὲρ τοσούτου δεῖν χρόνου ἐσπουδακέναι,  
ἀλλ' οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ παντός;<sup>414</sup>

For this reason a 'proof' of the endless condition of the soul is required. According to the argument developed at 10.608d3-611a4 the soul always exists and is immortal, insofar as neither an evil alien to it -like the body's evils- nor its own evil -injustice- can destroy it:

οὐκοῦν ὅποτε μῆδ' ὑφ' ἑνὸς ἀπόλλυται κακοῦ, μήτε οἰκείου μήτε  
ἀλλοτρίου, δῆλον ὅτι ἀνάγκη αὐτὸ ἀεὶ ὄν εἶναι· εἰ δ' ἀεὶ ὄν,  
ἀθάνατον.<sup>415</sup>

Independently of how happy and convincing this argument is<sup>416</sup> –or other possible arguments are (see 10.611b9-10)- as proof or demonstration for someone who does

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<sup>414</sup> "Do you think that something which is immortal should be seriously interested in this period of time, and not in the whole of time?" (10.608c9-d1)

<sup>415</sup> "In which case, if it is not destroyed by any evil –neither its own [i.e. injustice] nor anything else's [i.e. the body's]- it is obvious that it must necessarily be something which always is. And if it always is, then it must be immortal." (10.610e10-611a2).

<sup>416</sup> This 'proof' of immortality has been sometimes found particularly poor. See especially Annas (1981), pp. 344-349: "This is one of the few really embarrassingly bad arguments in Plato ..." (p.



not take the immortality of the soul as a fact,<sup>417</sup> it has the merit of connecting the immortality of soul with the indestructibility of justice and injustice and so makes a persuasive introduction to the idea of the long-lastingness of their effects:

...οὐκ ἄρα πάνδεινον φανεῖται ἡ ἀδικία, εἰ θανάσιμον ἔσται τῷ λαμβάνοντι -ἀπαλλαγὴ γὰρ ἂν εἴη κακῶν- ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον οἶμαι αὐτὴν φανήσεσθαι πᾶν τούναντίον...<sup>418</sup>

### 1.3. Examination of the soul in its simple and purest nature: consideration of the soul in the light of its desire for wisdom

In this representation of the soul the bodily aspects and miseries of the soul in our actual existence are put aside (as if Glaucus were separated from the marine deposits that covered his real body and made him appear like a monster), so that the soul can be rationally examined in its essential nature:

οἷον δ' ἐστὶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, οὐ λελωβημένον δεῖ αὐτὸ θεάσασθαι ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίας καὶ ἄλλων κακῶν, ὥσπερ νῦν ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα, ἀλλ' οἷόν ἐστιν καθαρὸν γιγνόμενον, τοιοῦτον ἱκανῶς λογισμῷ διαθεατέον, καὶ πολὺ γε κάλλιον αὐτὸ εὐρήσει καὶ ἐναργέστερον δικαιοσύνας τε καὶ ἀδικίας διόψεται καὶ πάντα ἃ νῦν

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344). She is in general, in my view (and see also Halliwell (1993), p. 27, n. 38), unfairly over-severe and unsympathetic regarding the value of the whole Book 10.

<sup>417</sup> Thus Glaucon at 10.608d3-6: οὐκ ἤσθησαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὅτι ἀθάνατος ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ οὐδέποτε ἀπόλλυται; - καὶ ὃς ἐμβλέψας μοι καὶ θαυμάσας εἶπε· μὰ Δί', οὐκ ἔγωγε· ('Don't you know for a fact', I said, 'that our soul is immortal, that it never dies'. He looked at me in astonishment. 'Good heavens, no', he said. 'I don't know that for a fact...').

<sup>418</sup> "Injustice will turn to be not such an alarming thing after all, if it really is fatal to anyone who catches it. It would be an escape from his troubles. But I'm much more inclined to think it will turn out to be the opposite...". (10.610d5-e1).

διήλθομεν. νῦν δὲ εἶπομεν μὲν ἀληθῆ περὶ αὐτοῦ, οἷον ἐν τῷ παρόντι φαίνεται [...] τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμεῖς θεώμεθα διακειμένην ὑπὸ μυρίων κακῶν.<sup>419</sup>

Such an *a-priori* examination of the soul requires us to consider the soul from the perspective of its love of wisdom because of which it longs for what is divine, immortal and eternal, being akin to it:

εἰς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐννοεῖν ὧν ἄπτεται καὶ οἷον ἐφίεται ὁμιλιῶν, ὡς συγγενῆς οὖσα τῷ τε θεῷ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ τῷ ἀεὶ ὄντι, καὶ οἷα ἂν γένοιτο τῷ τοιούτῳ πᾶσα ἐπισπομένη καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὁρμῆς ἐκκομισθεῖσα ἐκ τοῦ πόντου ἐν ᾧ νῦν ἐστίν, καὶ περικρουσθεῖσα πέτρας τε καὶ ὄστρεα ἃ νῦν αὐτῇ ἄτε γῆν ἐστιωμένη, γεγραὰ καὶ πετρώδη πολλὰ καὶ ἄγρια περιπέφυκεν ὑπὸ τῶν εὐδαιμόνων λεγομένων ἐστιάσεων. καὶ τότε ἂν τις ἴδοι αὐτῆς τὴν ἀληθῆ φύσιν, εἴτε πολυειδῆς εἴτε μονοειδῆς, εἴτε ὅπη ἔχει καὶ ὅπως· νῦν δὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ πάθη τε καὶ εἶδη, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, ἐπιεικῶς αὐτῆς διεληλύθαμεν.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> “But if we want to know what it [i.e. the soul] is really like, we shouldn’t look at it in the form we currently see it in, crippled by its partnership with the body and other evils, but in its pure state. And that’s something which can only be seen adequately by means of reason. We’ll find it far more beautiful, and get much clearer view of justices and injustices, and all the things we have so far described. All we’ve said is the truth about the way it appears at present [...] looking at the soul when it is afflicted with all these evils”. (10.611b10-d7).

<sup>420</sup> “[In order to consider the soul in its pure nature, we should look to] the soul’s love of wisdom. We should bear in mind what it clings to, the kind of company it yearns for, since it is kin to that which is divine, immortal and always existing, and what it could become if it devoted itself entirely to this, and if this enthusiasm brought it up out of the sea in which it now is, striking from it the stones and shells, all those coarse accretions of earth and stone which have grown round it as a result of its supposedly ‘happy’ feasting upon the earth. Then you should see the soul’s true nature, whether is complex or

As we have seen in previous sections, through the development of the love of wisdom a person tries to attain the science of dialectics –the science of what each thing essentially is in relation to the other, with its foundations on the Good- and, in this way, to become wise, just and happy in his actual existence, as far as is possible. This development of the soul's desire for the truth is the only thing that counts when the soul is considered in its essential nature and deprived from its bodily aspects in the light of a possible *post-mortem* existence.<sup>421</sup>

#### **1.4. Rewards from the gods for the just man in the after-death existence of the soul**

If this representation of the soul in its essential nature is done in the light of an eternal existence, it allows us to consider the value of justice not only in itself, as in the rest of the *Republic*, or even in light of the possible rewards and prizes from men and gods in this life (10.612b7-614a3): the rewards that are now taken into account are the ones which the just man, who has tried to be like the gods in his incarnate existence in as much as possible, would receive from the gods themselves after death (10.614a5-8) -the just man being beloved by them (θεοφιλής, see 612e8-613a2)- are the ones now taken into account:

οὕτως ἄρα ὑποληπτέον περὶ τοῦ δικαίου ἀνδρός, ἐάντ' ἐν πενίᾳ γίγνηται ἐάντ' ἐν νόσοις ἢ τινι ἄλλῳ τῶν δοκούντων κακῶν, ὥς τούτῳ

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simple –or however exactly it is. For the moment, however, I think we have given an adequate description of the things that happen to it, the shapes it can assume, in human life” (10.611e1-612a6).

<sup>421</sup> Thus there is no contradiction between the tripartite treatment of the soul in Book 4, which is more or less present in the rest of the *Republic*, and the consideration of the soul in its pure, simple nature in Book 10. Plato makes clear that in this case he is assuming a different perspective (on this point see Guthrie (1975), p.233 and Szlezák (1993), pp.72-75 and (1976); differently Robinson (1970), p. 43). In Book 4 the soul is considered associated with the bodily and so exhibiting its potentially irrational aspects, while in Book 10 it is examined simply in the light of its essential nature and desire for wisdom.

ταῦτα εἰς ἀγαθόν τι τελευτήσει ζῶντι ἢ καὶ ἀποθανόντι. οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὑπὸ γε θεῶν ποτε ἀμελεῖται ὅς ἂν προθυμεῖσθαι ἐθέλῃ δίκαιος γίγνεσθαι καὶ ἐπιτηδεύων ἀρετὴν εἰς ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ ὁμοιοῦσθαι θεῷ.<sup>422</sup>

## 2. The eschatological myth: being what we desire in the light of eternity and in the framework of a cosmic order

The *post-mortem* destiny of the soul is presented in Book 10 of the *Republic* through an eschatological myth full of rich imagery. The value and function of this myth needs briefly to be outlined within the framework of Plato's complex attitude to the use of myths.

Plato's abundant use of myth and his general reflections on poetry suggest that, though to be condemned when uncritically used,<sup>423</sup> story-telling is valued and well-considered if it is put at the service of philosophical teaching. Like the eschatological myths of the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* or the creational myth of the *Timaeus*, the myth of *Republic* 10 either expresses what is not in itself expressible by means of

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<sup>422</sup> "In the same way, we must take it that if the just man falls into poverty or sickness, or any of the other things which are generally regarded as evils, it will turn out well for him either in his lifetime or after his death. He will never be neglected by the gods if he is willing to be serious about becoming just, practise virtue, and become as much like a god as it is possible for a man to be". (10.613a4-b1).

<sup>423</sup> In *Republic* II myths are condemned when they misrepresent the real nature of the gods. Superficial rationalistic interpretations of myths are also rejected for example at *Phaedr.* 229c ff. through Socrates' critical reflections on sophistic exegesis of the story of Boreas and Orithuia. As he says at *Phaedr.* 275b-c, in the end what really matters in relation to any story is whether the tale expresses something true or not. On this point see also Halliwell (1993), p.27, n.32 and Szlezák (1993), pp. 96-97.

a philosophical argument on its own<sup>424</sup> or suggests through images something not susceptible at present to a complete conceptual explanation.<sup>425</sup>

We are told that this myth is a narrative once given by Er, a man who, by being able to come back from the kingdom of the dead, could remember what things are like there. Human beings normally forget these *post-mortem* experiences along with their previous lives given that all souls, before taking up again an incarnate existence, are obliged to drink from the River of Carelessness (παρὰ τὸν Ἀμέλητα ποταμόν, 621a5)<sup>426</sup> and then to cross the River of Forgetfulness (Lethe, 621c1-2). Through this the soul is plunged into oblivion of its previous vicissitudes or blessings. The unusual nature of Er's experience underlines the hypothetical character of what we are told through this myth: in fact, nobody can assert anything concrete regarding a possible existence after death. However, the myth opens to us the possibility of a wider comprehension insofar as ideas that have already been treated in the previous books of the *Republic* and in the points immediately before the myth are now brought together into a holistic picture with other new issues. According to the myth, the development of our desire for wisdom (i.e. our essential condition as human beings) is taken into account not only under the perspective of an eternal existence –as in the preliminaries to the eschatological story- but also under that of a cosmological order:

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<sup>424</sup> Thus μύθος represents what λόγος fails to explain. Halliwell (1993), p.17 follows this kind of interpretation.

<sup>425</sup> In consequence a μύθος as a whole can potentially be rendered as λόγος. See esp. *Gorg.* 523a. However, because of its power of communicating the truth in an intuitive form, μύθος preserves its own characteristics and advantages over λόγος (see Szlezák (1993), p.98). Some scholars have even suggested that through myths, such as the one of *Republic* 10, Plato means to present alternative/opposite views to the ones developed through the philosophical arguments so that the reader has to arrive at his own conclusion regarding these debatable matters (see McCabe (1992)).

<sup>426</sup> I think that the most appropriate way of understanding that the souls drink water from τὸν

Ἀμέλητα ποταμόν is that they drink water of 'carelessness' in the sense that they are not any longer equipped with knowledge (if they ever were): they will need to strive for its acquisition in their new incarnate life. Forgetfulness of this knowledge takes place, more precisely, by the souls passing across the plain of Oblivion (621a2-3) and the Lethe river (621c1-2).

once our souls are in a disembodied state, our deeds during our incarnate life are either rewarded with a (periodic) full contemplation of the Forms or punished in ways that accord with cosmic justice; the choice of our future incarnate lives is presented as depending on the extent to which we develop our knowledge of what is good and bad in our present existence and as being woven into the destiny of the world.<sup>427</sup>

More specifically, four possible kinds of eternal existence -including both an embodied and disembodied states- are open to us according to the degree of development of our desire for the truth: a) those who have been philosophers in this life enjoy a god-like existence after death and, having knowledge, are able to choose a good kind of new incarnate life afterwards. If they are again philosophers, they will escape again from the cycle of pain. b) Those who have had an ordinary life and not been always just are punished when in a disembodied state and do not have the knowledge to choose a better new kind of life. Nevertheless, they may do it and so manage to escape from the cycle of sufferings next time. c) Those who have not been philosophers but had *a sort of* just kind of life are rewarded with celestial enjoyments but might prefer to reincarnate in the worst kind of existence due to their lack of knowledge and so come back to a cycle of misery. d) Those who have lived in an extremely unjust way are tormented forever and not allowed to enter a body again. Never again do they have the choice of escaping their existence of suffering.

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<sup>427</sup> On the representation through the myth of a rationally organized universe see Guthrie (1975), p. 558 and Halliwell (1993), pp. 17, 20 and 176-183. Plato's astronomical model might have a basis in astronomical conceptions of the time (see Halliwell (1993), pp. 180 and 19-20). However, his interest is not so much to give an astronomical description but to reveal the metaphysical implications of this astronomical order (see Halliwell (1993), p. 180). As McCabe (1992), pp. 63-64 points out in relation to the *Timaeus*, Plato's conception of the universe goes beyond the data of sense-perception and presupposes a teleological/ethical understanding of it, either framed within an intentionalist model or a natural, organic conception of the cosmos. Similarly Sedley (1989) suggests that the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* supposes a teleological conception of the universe and at the same time provides some specific cosmological explanations.

In this way, according to a literal reading of the story, the reader will see it as describing the consequences of living or not living according to reason's desire for the truth and the real good or not in a *post-mortem* existence, which is part of an endless cycle of reincarnation within a mathematically ordered universe.

### **2.1. Understanding the deeds of human beings in their embodied existences within the frame of a cosmic justice**

The myth describes the soul as continuously existing by always reincarnating itself again in a body after a thousand-year pilgrimage of either earthly sufferings or heavenly enjoyments in accordance with the merits or demerits of its previous life. There are obscure points in this story of reincarnation: e.g. about what kind of identity can be retained through different re-embodiments, especially if memory of our previous 'lives' is removed.<sup>428</sup> However, it has the fundamental merit of successfully combining within it two of the points previously proposed in Book 10: the imperishable condition of our souls and, alongside it, the indestructibility of the acts of justice or injustice committed in our embodied -present- existences. It also in some way represents the impossibility for human beings -even in the case of the philosopher- of escaping permanently from an impure, limited existence.<sup>429</sup>

The doctrine of reincarnation allows us also to envisage, in some way, the sequence of life and death for human beings and animals as part of a continuous process pertaining to the whole universe within the perspective of eternity.<sup>430</sup> The images of the myth presented at 616b-617d make us conceive this universe as being mathematically structured and subject to an inevitable order:<sup>431</sup> the revolutions of the heavenly bodies -sun, moon, planets and fixed stars moving around the earth- are

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<sup>428</sup> See Halliwell (1993), pp. 21-22.

<sup>429</sup> See Halliwell (1993), p. 23.

<sup>430</sup> Similarly Archer-Hind (1973) [1894], pp. xiv ff. in his commentary on the argument from *παλιγγενεσία* in the *Phaedo*.

<sup>431</sup> See above n. 427.

described as being like whorls which, by virtue of being inserted inside the other, produce in their rotation the 'music' or 'harmony' of the cosmos. They are all moved by the spindle of Necessity, which 'weaves', with the help of her three daughters -the Fates-, not only the astral movements but also the destinies of human beings. Thus each human life with its bad or good deeds is now to be understood as having contributed to this cosmic justice and, in consequence, as receiving punishments or rewards for them according to the rational order of the cosmos which despatches souls to different areas of the universes so that they have their prizes and penalties distributed in mathematical proportions. This is expressed in the myth as follows: the disembodied souls are either rewarded with a journey of one thousand years through the heavenly regions or punished by suffering in diverse ways inside the earth for a millennium;<sup>432</sup> the punishment or reward is ten times worse or better than the good or bad action committed in life (10.605a-c). The length of one hundred years is also attributed to a regular embodied existence. What matters here is not indeed the accuracy of the figures but Plato's intention of showing through them that human existence is integrated within a wider, metaphysical framework of cosmic justice which is mathematically determined. In this understanding both of two things are true: on one hand, we *choose* our destinies because the punishments and rewards depend on whether we have preferred to live our previous lives in a just or unjust way; on the other hand, the consequences of how we have chosen to live are contained within a fatalistic, cosmic organization, which transcends us and from which we cannot escape.

But not only do our disembodied destinies depend on this greater order: our reincarnations and new lives are simultaneously determined by it, as well as by ourselves. After the souls, having returned from their happy or painful pilgrimage in

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<sup>432</sup> The "sadistic hell", as Annas says (1981), p. 351 depicted for the incurable tyrants by Plato in Book 10 seems to contradict the advice given at 3.386b-c that is not to tell terrifying stories to the young guardians about the underworld as they must not fear death. Did Plato maybe think that this kind of terrorizing story was, nevertheless, beneficial for adults who have followed the long arguments of the *Republic*? Might he be suggesting that is in fact 'hell' to be forever at a distance from the good universally desired?



a disembodied state for a millennium, rest in a meadow, they contemplate the order of the universe and get ready to choose a new mortal existence. This selection is in a certain degree limited as it is made according to an order which is established randomly -the lots which lie on the lap of the Fate Lachesis and are haphazardly thrown by the prophet - so that the souls which are in the final positions have fewer types of lives available to choose from (617d). Moreover, once each soul has chosen its form of life -the types of lives also being kept on the lap of Lachesis-, Lachesis gives to each of them a δαίμων,<sup>433</sup> who will look after its life and execute its choices (10.620d-e; see also 617e). Then, after their destinies are tied to each soul and sealed by her sisters Clotho and Atropos, the souls go underneath the throne of Necessity (10.620e-621a). All these elements underline that our embodied existences are subject to a fatalism according to which our only choice seems to be the selection among the lives available to us at that moment. However, the development of or failure to develop virtue and love of the truth in our embodied existences -a development which makes us prefer the life of the just not only now but also after death- is up to us in as much as we are co-workers in and directly responsible for the weaving of our destinies. The god is not to blame.

## **2.2. Kinds of existences for human beings from the perspective of eternity and the development of reason's desire for the truth**

As seen above, the doctrine of reincarnation present in the story narrated by Er sums up the points previously introduced in Book 10: the indestructibility of the soul together with its justice and injustice and its examination in its disembodied state from the perspective of eternity. The myth also picks up on another crucial point from the preliminaries: our soul in its purest, truest, simplest nature is constituted by its desire for the truth. The development of reason's desire for wisdom determines not only how close we get to the attainment of the real good in our present life but,

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<sup>433</sup> δαίμων comes from the verb δαίομαι that means 'to allot, allocate, distribute, assign portions', and fundamentally refers to a destiny given to a human being by the gods. On this meaning see *LSJ*, s.v. δαίμων and Chantraine (1968) and Griffith (2000), p. 341, n. 28.

above all, in our *post-mortem* existence and future reincarnations. For the whole of eternity the dialectical knowledge of justice founded in the knowledge of the Good gained through a philosophical way of life is what takes us as close as is possible for a human being to the good universally desired and, in this way, to the reward of a god-like existence. Thus, although, as shown above, our deeds in our embodied existence meet an unavoidable reckoning in the cosmic justice of a universe mathematically organized and in this sense our lives are subject to destiny, we nevertheless *choose* how we take part in this inevitable fate by living or not living a philosophical life and, consequently, what we desire to be.

### 2.2.1. Kinds of disembodied existence and necessary reincarnation according to the leading desire in our present life

Er reports how, after we die as a compound of soul and body, our souls in a state of disembodiment are judged so that they are sent on a thousand-year journey either of enjoyment through the heavenly regions or of different degrees of suffering inside the earth. These delights or torments are described by the souls who have just returned from their millennial pilgrimage:

δικαστὰς δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων καθῆσθαι, οὓς, ἐπειδὴ διαδικάσειαν, τοὺς μὲν δίκαιους κελεύειν πορεύεσθαι τὴν εἰς δεξιάν τε καὶ ἄνω διὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ...τοὺς δὲ ἀδίκους τὴν εἰς ἀριστεράν τε καὶ κάτω [...]. διηγεῖσθαι δὲ ἀλλήλαις τὰς μὲν ὀδυρομένας τε καὶ κλαούσας, ἀναμιμνησκομένας ὅσα τε καὶ οἷα πάθοιεν καὶ ἴδοιεν ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ γῆς πορείᾳ -εἶναι δὲ τὴν πορείαν χιλιέτη- τὰς δ' αὖ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εὐπαθείας διηγεῖσθαι καὶ θεὰς ἀμηχάνους τὸ κάλλος.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> "In between were seated judges, who when they gave their judgements ordered the just to take the way which led to the right and upwards, through the heavens [...]. The unjust they ordered to take the left hand, downward way. [...] As they (i.e. the returning souls) exchanged accounts, the first group were wailing and weeping as they recalled all the terrible things they had seen and

Thus, the myth suggests that in some way a life of justice will be rewarded within an ordered cosmos by joining what is good, an unjust life with an existence “inside the earth” or, in other words, far from the god-like enjoyments of the heavenly regions. In this sense human life appears as a part of the destiny of a universe which Plato conceives as being ordered for (and by) the good. But, although this cosmic weaving operates far beyond our power to influence it, nevertheless, we have had our choice in our incarnate existence of living justly or unjustly and developing or failing to develop reason’s desire for the truth and the real good.

Similarly through its explanation of how souls reassume new incarnate existences the myth also depicts how the achievement of a just or unjust existence in this life through the development or failure to develop reason’s desire for the truth meets its retribution in the general justice of the cosmos. Insofar as, at that moment, only if the person has previously practised philosophy, is he able to recognize and choose a just life, what we continue to be in our embodied existence depends once again upon whether or not in our previous incarnate life we have tried to achieve dialectical knowledge by the development of love of wisdom of our soul:

...καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μάλιστα ἐπιμελητέον ὅπως ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἀμελήσας τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος καὶ ζητητῆς καὶ μαθητῆς ἔσται, ἐάν ποθεν οἶός τ' ᾗ μαθεῖν καὶ ἐξευρεῖν τίς αὐτὸν ποιήσει δυνατόν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα, βίον καὶ χρηστὸν καὶ πονηρὸν διαγιγνώσκοντα, τὸν βελτίω ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν ἀεὶ πανταχοῦ αἰρεῖσθαι [...], ὥστε ἐξ ἀπάντων αὐτῶν δυνατόν εἶναι συλλογισάμενον αἰρεῖσθαι, πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς φύσιν ἀποβλέποντα, τὸν τε χεῖρω καὶ τὸν ἀμείνω βίον, χεῖρω μὲν καλοῦντα ὃς αὐτὴν ἐκεῖσε ἄξει, εἰς τὸ ἀδικωτέραν γίγνεσθαι, ἀμείνω δὲ ὅστις εἰς τὸ δικαιοτέραν. τὰ δὲ

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experienced in their journey—their thousand-year journey—beneath the earth. Those who had come from the heavens, by contrast, were recounting the wonderful things that had happened to them and indescribably beautiful sights they had seen.” (10.614c3-615a4).

ἄλλα πάντα χαίρειν ἔάσει· ἐωράκαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ζῶντί τε καὶ τελευτήσαντι αὕτη κρατίστη αἵρεσις.<sup>435</sup>

So again the choice of the soul of its new incarnate life is determined by whether or not its desire for truth and knowledge of the Good was developed during its embodied existence.

In this sense four kinds of existences from the perspective of eternity are open to us:

a) People who have committed certain unjust actions in their embodied life receive punishment in their discarnate existence (10.615a1-3). Given that they have not practised philosophy and achieved knowledge of the Good, they will probably continue failing to choose the best kinds of life. The new choice of life made by these souls is influenced by the habits, desires and experiences that have dominated their previous life (10.620a2ff.). For example, someone like Atalanta, who loved masculine pursuits, chooses the life of an athlete; Epeius, the designer of the Trojan horse, chooses the life of a female artist out of his love for arts; Odysseus opts for an uneventful, obscure life after the sufferings endured in his erratic, adventurous existence. Others prefer lives of animals: Orpheus chooses the musical life of a swan but avoids a human kind of existence in order to prevent being conceived in a woman's womb, due to his bad experiences with women in his previous life; brave Ajax takes the life of a courageous lion and Agamemnon the life of a royal eagle. As they cannot knowingly choose a just life, they never attain a permanent non-painful

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<sup>435</sup> "It is why the greatest care must be directed towards having each and every one of us disregard all other branches of study, and be a follower and student of this branch of ours, in the hope that he can learn and discover who it is who will give him the ability and knowledge to distinguish the good life from the bad, and choose always and everywhere, out of all those possible, the life which is better. [...] Taking all these things into consideration, he must be able to choose, defining the worse and better life with reference to the nature of the soul, calling that worse which leads the soul along the road to greater injustice, and that better which leads the soul along the road of greater justice. He will not pay attention to anything else. After all, *this is the crucial choice, as we have seen, both during his lifetime and after his death.*" (10.618b7-e4).

and a regular god-like condition insofar as they have not developed the love of wisdom of their soul and striven for the attainment of knowledge of what is good. In consequence, they will probably remain at a distance for an indefinite time from the fulfilment of their desire for the real good as well as for a god-like existence. However, provided they choose a human life, they will still have the chance of, at times, having a just life during their incarnate existence and at least temporarily leave an existence of misery.

b) People who by chance -not by knowledge- have had *a sort of* virtuous kind of incarnate life receive in their disembodied state the reward of a god-like existence of celestial blessings for one thousand years. However, insofar as they have not tried to attain knowledge of the Good in their previous incarnate lives and here attained virtue only by habit (10.619c7-d1), they also might not only not choose a right kind of life -as in the case of the people of category a) above- but might even prefer a tyrannical life (10.619b7-d3) because of their ignorance. Through the possibility of this choice being made by people who have had a just life just accidentally -not knowingly- Plato surely wants to underline that only virtue acquired through wisdom can assure regular ownership of the real good as far as is possible for a human being.

c) People who have been irredeemably evil are tormented forever and are thus always separated from the real good universally desired. They have no escape from their misery as they can never be reincarnated again and achieve a better existence, remaining for ever in Tartarus (see for example the case of Ardiaeus and other tyrants at 10.615c5-616a7).

d) Finally, those who have had a philosophical life and striven for the attainment of knowledge of the Good not only achieve the reward of a thousand-years of the enjoyment of heavenly happiness in their discarnate existence (like those of category b) above, who have attained virtue by habit) but also get the highest prize of being able to correctly choose a virtuous kind of new incarnate existence, as they possess wisdom and knowledge of the Good (10.618b6ff.). As a consequence, a continuous

ownership of the real good as far as is possible for a human being is available only to them.<sup>436</sup>

In this way, if in our present condition, our other sources of motivation having being rightly orientated in the early childhood, we develop reason's desire for truth and attain an internally just state in our soul and with it happiness, this also allows us the enjoyment of happiness and sharing of what is good and beautiful after life. This god-like immortality would also bring us as far as is possible to possession of the real good which is universally desired during the time of our disembodied existence. By contrast, if we happened to choose to live unjustly during our incarnate existence, we do not only encounter misery in this life: we also attain after death only a second-rate immortality and experience greater penalties according to the order of the universe.

### 2.2.2. Desire and determinism

It has often been pointed out that<sup>437</sup> determinism seems to predominate in Plato's proposal given that after this primeval decision of what type of life we choose to live we are tied to it as a destiny.<sup>438</sup> However, this element of the myth might indicate rather that, although all of us are born with a certain φύσις and ἦθος and in certain circumstances, we do not choose either,<sup>439</sup> it is again up to us how we choose to live

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<sup>436</sup> This discrimination of different kinds of *post-mortem* lives is slightly different from that which appears in the geographical myth of the *Phaedo* at 113a-3. Nevertheless, the differences can be explained, I think, in relation to the diverse focuses of the two dialogues, the ultimate meaning of the different kinds of *post-mortem* existences remaining the same.

<sup>437</sup> Halliwell (1993), pp. 21-23 consistently points out many problematic elements of this sort in the myth in this respect. See also Annas (1981), p. 350, who in general dismisses the myth as "a painful shock" (p. 349).

<sup>438</sup> See above Chapter 2, Section IV, 2.1. Understanding of the deeds of human beings in their embodied existences within a cosmic justice, pp. 242 ff..

<sup>439</sup> The assumption that human beings have different nature and characters is presupposed in the educative and political project of the *Republic* and clearly symbolized in the myth of the races.

this life.<sup>440</sup> As the prophet who throws the lots to establish in what order the souls will choose their new life says, all of us have the opportunity to have a valuable life and of living it thoroughly:

καὶ τελευταίῳ ἐπιόντι, ξὺν νῶ ἐλομένῳ, συντόνως ζῶντι κεῖται βίος ἀγαπητός, οὐ κακός.<sup>441</sup>

The exception might be those who irresponsibly choose a tyrannical life, i.e. who have this kind of disposition or nature. At 10.617d6-e5 it is also emphasised that there is no established destiny but rather each individual is the maker/craftsman of the virtue of his own life:<sup>442</sup>

ἀνάγκης θυγατρὸς κόρης Λαχέσεως λόγος. Ψυχὰὶ ἐφήμεροι, ἀρχὴ ἄλλης περιόδου θνητοῦ γένους θανατηφόρου. οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἰρήσεσθε. πρῶτος δ' ὁ λαχὼν πρῶτος αἰρείσθω βίον ᾧ συνέσται ἐξ ἀνάγκης. ἀρετὴ δὲ ἀδέσποτον, ἣν τιμῶν καὶ ἀτιμάζων πλέον καὶ ἔλαττον αὐτῆς ἕκαστος ἐξει. αἰτία ἐλομένου· θεὸς ἀναίτιος.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> The frequency of αἵρεσις and its derivatives in the whole narration of the eschatological myth are remarkable.

<sup>441</sup> "Even the last to come forward, provided he chooses sensibly and lives with integrity, has a worthwhile life before him, not a bad life". (10.619b3-5).

<sup>442</sup> For a similar interpretation of the myth see Crombie (1962), p. 374.

<sup>443</sup> "The word of the maiden Lachesis, daughter of Necessity. Souls, creatures of a day, here begins another cycle of mortal life and the death it brings. Your guardian spirit will not be given to you by lot. You will choose your guardian spirit for yourselves. Let the one who draws the first lot be the first to choose life. He will be then joined to it by Necessity. *Virtue knows no master. Your respect or contempt for it will give each of you a greater or smaller share. The choice makes you responsible. God is not responsible.*" (10.617d6-e5)

It has also been suggested that Plato's scheme does not leave any room even for improvement<sup>444</sup> insofar as all the souls walk through the meadow of Forgetfulness (10.621a2-3), drink from the river of Carelessness (10.621a5) and cross the river Lethe before reassuming an embodied existence (10.621c1-2).<sup>445</sup> However, perhaps amusingly, perhaps also significantly, it is suggested that, although all souls lose their memory of all the things that they have seen, given that they are obliged to drink from the waters of Carelessness, certain of them who are not guided by φρόνησις drink *too much*:

μέτρον μὲν οὖν τι τοῦ ὕδατος πᾶσιν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πιεῖν, τοὺς δὲ φρονήσει μὴ σωζομένους πλέον πίνειν τοῦ μέτρου τὸν δὲ ἀεὶ πίνοντα πάντων ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι.<sup>446</sup>

This might suggest that it is possible, when we are advised by reason, *not to drink too much* and, thus, though temporarily forgetting, to be able at least partially to remember by virtue of an appropriate education the understanding of what a good life and a bad one are like, the rewards and punishments that we might receive in the framework of a mathematically ordered cosmos and the beautiful visions of the heavenly regions that the just souls contemplate. Thus, as in other dialogues such as *Meno*, *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, ἀνάμνησις of what we once knew would be possible in this life or, in other words, the attainment of dialectical knowledge through the development of reason's desire for the truth is an open possibility for all of us.<sup>447</sup> In fact, as we have seen, the only guarantee of the enjoyment of a happy and just condition in our embodied life as well as in our disembodied existence lies in the

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<sup>444</sup> Halliwell (1993), p.22 says that the whole scheme seems to suggest rather a retrogression than a progression through the reincarnated existences.

<sup>445</sup> See above n. 426.

<sup>446</sup> "Drinking a limited amount of the water was compulsory for all of them, *but those who were not saved by reason drank more than a limited amount*. And as each drank, he forgot everything he had seen." (10.621a6-b1)

<sup>447</sup> See Halliwell (1993), p. 21.



achievement of this wisdom and in nothing else. Once again, the consideration of what a *post-mortem* existence would be like is fundamentally focused on the development *now and here* of a philosophical way of life that will enable us to attain, in as far as is possible for a human being, knowledge of truth and so the eternal possession of the good universally desired.

### 2.3. The two levels of interpretation of the myth

#### 2.3.1. Diachronic understanding of the myth: regular *post-mortem* attainment of the eternal possession of the good

Thus, as shown above, a more literal, diachronic interpretation of the myth is available for anyone who is able to believe in the immortality of the soul and to open his mind to a wider comprehension (whether or not it is possible to render this wider comprehension through a full conceptual explanation or not). In this case, he will be able to understand that the myth of the end of *Republic* both asserts that human life is part of the order of the universe and in this sense subject to a destiny but, at the same time, without contradiction, that we are co-constructors of this destiny by virtue of choices made *in our present existence* as whether we live or fail to live a life led by reason's desire for the truth.<sup>448</sup> If we always choose to be philosophers, we will be able regularly to enjoy for a millennium an existence in the company of the gods and not only now but also forever be able to get as close as possible to the *eternal* possession of the good which is universally desired (provided we continue choosing a philosophical way of life).

ἐπεὶ εἴ τις ἀεί, ὁπότε εἰς τὸν ἐνθάδε βίον ἀφικνοῖτο, ὑγιῶς φιλοσοφοῖ  
καὶ ὁ κλῆρος αὐτῷ τῆς αἰρέσεως μὴ ἐν τελευταίοις πίπτοι, κινδυνεύει  
...οὐ μόνον ἐνθάδε εὐδαιμονεῖν ἄν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε καὶ

δεῦρο πάλιν πορείαν οὐκ ἂν χθονίαν καὶ τραχεῖαν πορεύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ  
λείαν τε καὶ οὐρανίαν.<sup>449</sup>

Thus someone who believes in the indestructibility of the soul together with its justice or injustice and in its participation in a wider cosmic justice will feel -so perhaps Plato hopes- even more committed to practise a life of philosophy and virtue, insofar as he will think himself as constructing his destiny of happiness and getting closer to the possession of the good not only for the present time but for ever, such that he might gain a god-like existence in so far as is possible for a human being:

ἀλλ' ἂν ἐμοὶ πειθώμεθα, νομίζοντες ἀθάνατον ψυχὴν καὶ δυνατὴν  
πάντα μὲν κακὰ ἀνέχεσθαι, πάντα δὲ ἀγαθὰ, τῆς ἄνω ὁδοῦ ἀεὶ  
ἐξόμεθα καὶ δικαιοσύνην μετὰ φρονήσεως παντὶ τρόπῳ  
ἐπιτηδεύσομεν, ἵνα καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς φίλοι ὦμεν καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς, αὐτοῦ  
τε μένοντες ἐνθάδε, καὶ ἐπειδὴν τὰ ἄθλα αὐτῆς κομιζώμεθα, ὥσπερ  
οἱ νικηφόροι περιαιγιρόμενοι, καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν τῇ χιλιέτει πορεία,  
ἣν διεληλύθαμεν, εὖ πράττωμεν.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Similarly in Heraclitus we find the assertion that everything happens according to the λόγος in 22B1 and at the same time that all men, including the 'sleeping ones', collaborate with what happens in the world (22B75).

<sup>449</sup> "However, if there is anyone who every time he enters this life here, consistently pursues philosophy in the right way, then provided the way the lot falls out does not put him among the last to choose, the chances are ...not only that he will be happy here, but also that his journey from here [i.e. incarnate existence] to there [i.e. disembodied existence] and back again will be along the smooth, heavenly road, not the rough, terrestrial one". (10.619d7-e5)

<sup>450</sup> "And if we take my advice, we shall believe that the soul is immortal and capable of coping with all evils and all goods, and we shall keep always to the upper way, doing whatever we can to practise justice with wisdom. That way we shall be friends to ourselves and to the gods, both while remaining here and when we carry off our prizes afterwards, like winning athletes on their victory tour. And so, here and on the thousand-year journey we have described, let us fare well." (10.621c3-d3).

### **2.3.2. Synchronic understanding of the myth: temporary achievement *now* and *here* of a god-like condition**

However, the complexity of the myth simultaneously also allows the reader to choose other interpretations of it.

An *a priori* consideration of the soul only in the light of its desire for wisdom –the sort of examination proposed in the preliminaries-<sup>451</sup> is also possible in our present existence so that only the degree to which we develop in this life the essential rational essence of our soul is taken into account, while its aspects related to the bodily are left aside. In the light of this interpretation, the rewards and punishments of men after death<sup>452</sup> could also be translated into terms of our present existence. Thus, the person who has a tyrannical way of life and is dominated by his lawless desires remains always separated from the good. The man who does not develop the rational nature of his soul properly and is neither completely just nor completely unjust has an existence in which pains and enjoyments are mixed; in some cases he might come to resemble an animal because of the lack of development of his reason. The just man achieves for the moment a god-like condition and, alongside it, the possession of the good universally desired. Nevertheless only the philosopher who is able *knowingly* to choose this kind of life can expect a regular enjoyment of this condition or at least not to end up by choosing, because of ignorance or lack of knowledge, the most unjust kind of life.

The possibility of this kind of reading has made authors like Annas think that the myth is in fact only an allegory of our choices in our present life and not a serious suggestion of what our existence would be like after death. Thus:

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<sup>451</sup> See above 1. Preliminary points to the eschatological myth: everlasting justice and injustice of the soul in the light of its desire for the truth and from the perspective of eternity, pp. 234 ff..

<sup>452</sup> See above 2.2.1. Kinds of disembodied existence and necessary reincarnation according to the leading desire in our present life, pp. 245 ff..

“Plato is not seriously suggesting that we have lived other lives and been through their consequences in heaven and hell, but only that our decisions, though they are bound to reflect the character we already have (602a) reflect also our awareness of the kind of life we are choosing to live and its results [...]. If we take the myth this way, then Plato is saying that we punish or reward ourselves now in choosing bad or good lives.”<sup>453</sup>

It is true that the myth could be taken as a useful and edifying allegory which gives symbolic reinforcement to arguments already developed in favour of a just and philosophical way of life. In this case, the story narrated by Er at least illustrates for the benefit of the sceptic, who might not accept the immortality of the soul,<sup>454</sup> what all the previous books of the *Republic* have tried to teach him: if we choose to live under the guidance of reason's desire for the truth, this brings us justice and, together with it, happiness and a god-like condition, for we are able to understand and *know* which forms of life are good and which ones are bad; if we prefer to have our lives guided by other desires (the love of honour of the 'spirited' part or the appetites), we only choose by habit and experience and so might prefer unjust lives or animal-like lives. The eternity of this kind of existence that each of us choose could also be reinterpreted in the following way: insofar as the choices that constitute each person's life are irreversible, through them we seal forever what our brief time of existence will be definitely, even if everything finishes with death. Rewards and punishments are also involved in this case too: the prize of the just man -even if suffering human injustice- is to contribute through his actions to the justice of universe (while also in fact having the best kind of life available); the punishment of the evil person is to remain at a distance from it.

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<sup>453</sup> Annas (1981), pp. 351-352. See also Halliwell (1993) p. 22

<sup>454</sup> Thus Glaucon at 10.608d3-6: - οὐκ ἤσθησαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὅτι ἀθάνατος ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ οὐδέποτε ἀπόλλυται; - καὶ ὃς ἐμβλέψας μοι καὶ θαυμάσας εἶπε· μὰ Δί', οὐκ ἔγωγε· (“ ‘Don't you know for a fact', I said, 'that our soul is immortal, that it never dies' He looked at me in astonishment. 'Good heavens, no', he said, 'I don't know that for a fact.'”).

Nevertheless, this allegorical understanding of the myth which might make sense even to the sceptic does not need to rule out a wider comprehension of it. Those who accept the immortality of the soul can follow Plato further first of all in a diachronic -more literal- understanding of the myth. They will be able to envisage what a *post-mortem* existence would be like in the light of eternity as well as in the framework of a just and mathematically ordered universe and so to understand that only a regular choice of the philosophical way of life is rewarded after death with a regular attainment of the good universally desired. But in addition to this, and at the same time and without contradiction, an interpretation of a synchronic type is also open to us: if we develop our love for truth, we might have access *in this life* at times -when knowing the Good- to a god-like condition and take part briefly in eternity according to the justice of the cosmos. This immortality in life and experience of eternity could be taken as an anticipation of what things might be like when after death we lose our bodily limitations.

### **CHAPTER III: Conclusion. Understanding the *Symposium* in the light of the *Republic***

In this last chapter it will be shown how questions which remain unsolved in the *Symposium* find a proper answer if we take the *Republic* into consideration.

#### **1. Different ways of looking for and understanding the good universally desired in the light of the theory of the tripartite soul of the *Republic***

The first question put at the end of the chapter on the *Symposium* was why, although all human beings desire the good, the erotic current can be directed to diverse goals (physical training, business, philosophy (*Symp.* 205d1-8)), to different forms of procreation (biological procreation; cultural procreation (*Symp.* 206b78) of “images of virtue” (*Symp.* 212a4); procreation, in contact with Beauty itself, of “true virtue” (*Symp.* 212a4-7), and even away from the real good (as in the case of Alcibiades). The tripartite theory of the soul of the *Republic* offers an articulated explanation of these facts.

Insofar as, as seen above, all human beings possess a rational aspect -the λογιστικόν- which desires the real good and, alongside it, the truth, the desire for the attainment of the good is universal. In fact, reason’s desire for wisdom is what constitutes our essence as human beings.<sup>455</sup> Nevertheless, not everybody is able to attain the good universally desired given that the achievement of it requires wisdom in order to recognize it (*Rep.* 6.505d5-506a7) and reason’s passion is not the only ‘stream’ of desire within our souls. There are two other ‘currents’ within each human being: the current of the appetites, which attempts their satisfaction, independently of their goodness or badness; and the ‘current’ of the ‘spirited’ part

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<sup>455</sup> See above Chapter 2, Section II, 3. The λογιστικόν, esp. 3.1. The leading desire of the rational part: desire for the truth.; 3.2. Desire for the truth and desire for the real good. The λογιστικόν’s understanding or misunderstanding of the real good, pp. 173 ff..

which looks for victory and honour.<sup>456</sup> This last aspect of us is bivalent: it sometimes works as an ally of the rational part and thus helps to drive the soul in the direction of what is good and true; it sometimes operates on its own and goes irrationally for its goals so that it is finally weakened, subdued and dragged along by the appetites. These ‘streams’ of desire are often in conflict with each other – especially the irrational appetites of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the rational part; the ‘spirited’ takes part on one or the other side of the conflict.<sup>457</sup> In the end, with the help of the kind of education received, one of the three currents dominates each person’s life and drags the other two in that direction (although the dominion of the θυμοειδές will be in principle precarious given that, if not helping reason, it is finally enfeebled by the appetitive part). Thus three types of human being are depicted according to what kind of ἔρως leads their lives: the lover of wealth, the lover of honour and the lover of truth (*Rep.* 9.581c). This tripartite classification overlaps with a distinction made but not explained in the *Symposium* according to which people love, look for immortality and strive for the eternal possession of the good in three fundamental ways: some focus their lives on biological procreation; others crave for fame through cultural productions; finally, a few of them are passionate for the truth.<sup>458</sup>

According to Socrates/Diotima in the *Symposium* the truest and highest expression of Eros/ἔρως, at least in human beings, is to be a φιλόσοφος and, at the same time, a procreator of true virtue.<sup>459</sup> From developments found in the *Republic* a coherent explanation of this can be established: only a lover of truth, i.e. a

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<sup>456</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section II, 1. The ἐπιθυμητικόν**, pp. 127 ff. and **2. The θυμοειδές**, pp. 148 ff..

<sup>457</sup> See above **Chapter 2, Section I: The deduction of the parts of the soul from a conflict of desires**, pp. 107 ff.

<sup>458</sup> The arguments developed through the present thesis have tried to give foundation to this correspondence between the *Republic* and the *Symposium*, already suggested by Cornford (1950).

<sup>459</sup> See above **Chapter 1, 3. Diotima/Socrates’ speech. The truest and best ἐγκώμιον to Eros: Eros as φιλόσοφος**, pp. 44 ff.

philosopher, who develops and strengthens reason's desire for truth will be able to attain, as far as possible for a human being, the real good universally desired and to procreate "authentic virtue", insofar as the attainment of justice and a full acquisition of the other virtues -moderation and bravery- requires knowledge of what the good is for an individual as well as for society, founded on the Good.<sup>460</sup> In other words the attainment of the good universally desired requires wisdom and the philosopher is the only one that looks for it.

By contrast, in individuals like the lover of wealth or the lover of honour who are dominated by their appetites or their desire for victory, reason cannot work on its own, achieve knowledge and establish what the real good is. Under these circumstances the λογιστικόν is obliged to examine things in the light of goals alien to it (the satisfaction of the appetites or of the 'spirited' part) and in contact with what is changeable so that knowledge of what is really good cannot be attained.<sup>461</sup> Thus, although these human beings also desire the real good, they are not able to attain it because of their lack of knowledge. They, being at different degrees of distance from it, have their lives directed to goals other than the real good, like business or physical training.

In the case of the tyrant, his rational aspect has completely deteriorated and his soul is governed by a 'drone' ἔρως which protects unnecessary appetites (*Rep.* 9.572e5-573a2), weakens the θυμοειδές, corrupts reason and takes him in the opposite direction to the real good. This would be the case of someone like Alcibiades who, in spite of his natural talent, has unfortunately developed a life dominated by unrestrained appetites and a desire for worldly renown in such a

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<sup>460</sup> See above Chapter 2, Section III, 2.4. Coincidence of the just man and the lover of the truth foundations of individual and social good on the Good, pp. 227 ff..

<sup>461</sup> See above Chapter 2, Section II, 3.3. Reason as the organon of judgement, pp. 180 ff..



way that he is not able to follow Socrates and change his life according to his better instincts -desires.<sup>462</sup>

However, the currents of desire other than reason can be appropriately trained in such a way that the rational part is at least not totally corrupted and the person attains as a second best *a sort of* virtuous life but without knowledge (since reason does not operate at a sufficiently high level and cannot establish what the real good is).<sup>463</sup> Thus, in some cases, a lover of wealth -dominated by his appetites- might be able, nevertheless, to have only useful, productive appetites and keep them within appropriate limits. In the ideal city of the *Republic* this would be the case of the class of the traders who, though not being capable of being guardians and, even less, philosopher rulers, can, nevertheless, positively contribute to the existence of justice in the πόλις and be themselves just, so far as this is possible for this kind of human being.<sup>464</sup> Similarly individuals who, like those described in the *Symposium*, devote themselves to their sexual appetites but keep them at the

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<sup>462</sup> See above **Chapter 1, 4.3. Ruinous love: Alcibiades**, pp. 98 ff. Alcibiades' final betrayal of the Athenians that led him to his tragic end is a good example of how even one of the bravest Athenian generals was finally able to have his 'spirited' part weakened by virtue of the growth of the unnecessary appetites. This event is not mentioned in the *Symposium* as the dramatic date of Agathon's party must be placed before these events. However, Plato might count on Alcibiades' final, tragic fall being vividly present in the mind of his audience.

<sup>463</sup> As shown above in **Chapter 2, Section II, 1.3.2. Inappropriate education of the appetites**, pp. 143 ff., the evolutionary description of the types of unjust lives made in Books 8 and 9 of the *Republic* shows that even timocratic and oligarchic individuals have an unstable psychological structure which might easily develop into a tyrannical condition. Nevertheless, in the case of the merchants and soldiers of the ideal state the organization of the whole state in the direction of the real good should help to keep their leading currents of desire within the appropriate limits. (On the influence of society on the classes of the traders and guardians see Lear (1992)). Otherwise, Plato's ideal just state would not be really just.

<sup>464</sup> The *Republic* focuses on the education of the future philosopher-rulers so that they may become just and wise in order to govern the city and make it just. However, the psychological and sociological characteristics of the other two classes, which are also part of the just state -the traders and the soldiers-, can be inferred.

service of biological procreation and the perpetuation of the species have their ἔργως roughly orientated towards the real good, although they will be never capable, as the philosopher is, of a maximum and permanent attainment of it.<sup>465</sup> Likewise a lover of honour might have the ambition for victory and fame of his 'spirited' part appropriately trained and rightly orientated so that reason, though not developed, is at least not enfeebled and annihilated (in fact maybe even supported by right beliefs) and his appetites are kept under control. Both the soldiers of the ideal state in the *Republic* who bravely and justly defend the city and those who productively focus their lives on the attainment of honour so that they perform brave deeds and leave behind valuable cultural productions, in virtue of their desire for fame, would be a good example of this possibility. However, even when these people have their leading currents of desire -their love of appetites or their love of honour- orientated in the best way possible, they lack the infallibility about what is good that only wisdom can provide and, thus, they just attain *a sort of virtue* -"an image of it"- given that their moderate lives, brave actions or cultural productions are not founded on and 'tied' to knowledge.

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<sup>465</sup> The philosopher is the only person who is permanently able to produce good deeds. The rest of the people only produce the good occasionally -for example, when they are biologically procreating, if dominated by their appetites, or performing a virtuous action, writing not a knowledgeable but at least, occasionally, a useful law, if ruled by their desire for honour. This fully agrees with the idea expressed at *Rep.* 6.505a-d: the good is universally desired but, unless the person possesses knowledge of what the good is, he/she only attains the good at times and randomly.

## 2. The erotic ascent of the *Symposium* as a sketch of the programme of earlier and higher education in the *Republic*

The second question that remains unanswered in the *Symposium* is what the stages of the erotic ascent would more specifically refer to. A certain correspondence between the erotic ascent of the *Symposium* and the dialectical journey of the philosopher exemplified through the image of the line and the allegory of the cave in Books 6 and 7 of the *Republic* has often been pointed out.<sup>466</sup> However, it has been less noticed that the *scala amoris* is actually a sketch of *the whole* programme of earlier and higher education in the *Republic*,<sup>467</sup> which consists in an appropriate training of the desires of the three parts of the soul so that reason's desire for the truth and the real good -i.e. Eros φιλόσοφος- rules and attains maximum development.

### 2.1. Earlier education: training of the sources of motivation in order to develop acquaintance with and understanding of physical and ethical beauty in general

According to *Symp.* 210d1-212a7 the erotic ascent starts when the person "initiated in the mysteries of love", being young, feels attracted to the beauty of bodies. At this first stage he/she should learn to appreciate physical beauty in general<sup>468</sup> -developing, in this way, a sort of aesthetic understanding- and to dismiss sexual intercourse, with the result that he is only interested only in the procreation of "beautiful discourses".

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<sup>466</sup> See for example Kahn (1987).

<sup>467</sup> It has already pointed out the coincidence between the acquisition of familiarity with aesthetical and moral beauty at the end of Book 3 and the first two stages of the erotic ascent in the *Symposium* (See ch. 9 of Raven (1965), pp.119-130). I hope to have given some new support to this idea insofar as I have tried to show how through earlier education the sources of motivation of the young guardians are trained in such a way that this acquaintance with what is good and beautiful can be achieved at the end of it.

<sup>468</sup> See *Symp.* 211c3-4 : ἀπὸ ἑνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα....

The next stage is ἀπὸ καλῶν σωμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα (*Symp.* 211c4-5). At this level the person learns to value the beauty of souls more than beauty of bodies and acquires a general understanding of the beauty of laws and pursuits which make human beings better. In Books 2 and 3 of the *Republic* the appropriate method -i.e. ὁρθός way of being initiated (*Symp.* 210a2)- for the development of attraction to and comprehension of aesthetic and moral beauty in general is substantially explained.<sup>469</sup>

In the period of primary instruction<sup>470</sup> the young guardians have their sources of motivation rightly orientated and limited with the result that the way is paved for reason's leadership. The desires of the irrational parts -the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the θυμοειδές- are trained mainly through habituation. The stream of the appetites such as hunger, thirst or greediness, which is by nature a powerful stream with a tendency to overdevelop, is kept within the limits of what is necessary through an appropriate training (for example, an appropriate diet *Rep.* 3.403e8ff.; *Rep.* 8.559a11ff.; provision of no more than a minimum material equipment *Rep.* 3.415e6ff.), so that it does not drag reason's stream into its channel and so interfere with its search for the truth and the real good. The aggressiveness of the 'spirited' part is developed through activities like physical training or/and hunting (*Rep.* 3.410b5-8; 8.549a3-7) but orientated in a specific way with the result that it makes that person resist against the pull of the appetites (*Rep.* 3.413c1ff.; 4.442b-c), fight only against the enemies of the city (*Rep.* 2.375b9-c4) and never give up his right convictions (*Rep.* 3.412d-e3). In this way it becomes an 'ally' of reason's pursuits and adds its current of desire to the stream which runs towards wisdom and the good. As regards the rational part itself, μουσική educates its love of wisdom (and simultaneously has an indirect positive effect on the habituation of the other two parts by providing appropriate examples

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<sup>469</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.4.2. The erotic ascent: stages previous to the contemplation of beauty itself, pp. 71 ff..

<sup>470</sup> On early education in the *Republic* see Chapter 2, Section III, 1. Primary education, pp. 204 ff..

and patterns of moderation and courage). In this way right beliefs are acquired, though in an unreflective way, as well as a certain affinity with the unchangeable, which is related to what is real and true. The final result of this earlier education of the young guardians' sources of motivation clearly overlaps with the first two levels of the erotic ascent of the *Symposium*. Their love of wisdom has been developed in such a way that the young guardians are now acquainted with and have unconsciously learnt to identify what is really good and beautiful and graceful (*Rep.* 3.401b8-d3). More specifically, the young guardians have become able to recognize the beauty of bodies and to esteem it only when it is attached to the beauty of souls (*Rep.* 3.402d), dismissing sexual intercourse with beautiful partners (*Rep.* 3.403a-b). In addition, they have become familiar with beautiful habits and pursuits and able to recognize universal characteristics of virtues in individual instances. Thus, earlier education in general and μουσική in particular trains the currents of desire of an individual in such a way that it increases within the young guardians their love of beauty (cf. τὰ τοῦ καλοῦ ἐρωτικά, *Rep.* 3.403c6-7) in close parallelism with what is shown at the first two stages of the *scala amoris*.

## 2.2. First stage of higher education: comprehending the beauty of beautiful sciences

The next stage in the erotic ascent of the *Symposium* consists in developing knowledge of the beauty of sciences -ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα, (*Symp.* 211c5-6)- and procreating beautiful discourses and outstanding thoughts out of inspiration from this beauty (*Symp.* 210d3-6).<sup>471</sup> This understanding implies the lover's ability to leave behind more radically than in the previous stages a comprehension of beauty based on beautiful particular instances such as a handsome adolescent, a fine-looking man or even a beautiful pursuit (210d1-3). As the expression ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ (*Symp.* 210d6) suggests, this phase

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<sup>471</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.4.2. The erotic ascent: stages previous to the contemplation of beauty itself, pp. 71 ff.

seems to be more philosophical than the previous stages. Which sciences these are and how this understanding is developed subsequently to the previous stages remains unexplained in the *Symposium*. On this point the *Republic* also provides a solid explanation.

Only those among the young guardians who have successfully passed the final tests of their earlier education are selected to begin the programme of higher education, given that only in their case is there a guarantee that the appetites will not interfere and the 'spirited' part will in fact collaborate with reason's search for the truth and the real good. Moreover those who have successfully passed have developed acquaintance with aesthetic and moral beauty in general as well as with unchangeableness and their reason possesses right beliefs, albeit without rational foundations. They are now ready to develop a more properly philosophical comprehension so that they become able to distinguish what is unchangeable in and common to multiple cases from what is changeable and multiple, to reason about unchangeable entities such as mathematical objects (7.527d) and, thus, to leave further and further behind an understanding based on particular, concrete entities.<sup>472</sup>

In other words –in the terms of the famous passage at the end of Book 5- their earlier education has prepared them to become philosophers or lovers of the truth, i.e. people ready to believe in (νομίζειν) Forms.<sup>473</sup> For example, in very similar terms to the erotic ascent of the *Symposium*, they are keen to accept the existence of Beauty itself, and able to follow someone who tries to guide them to the knowledge of it (differently from the man who just believes in beautiful things, 5.476c3) and, then, to distinguish beauty itself from the things that participate in it and vice versa (5.478c9-

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<sup>472</sup> On higher education in the *Republic* see Chapter 2, Section III, 2. Higher education: The development of the of the lover of the truth and of the just man through the higher education, pp. 214 ff..

<sup>473</sup> See Chapter 2, Section III, 2.2. The upward "conversion" of the soul according to the end of Book 5: being a philosopher or lover of the truth and the real good, pp. 219 ff..

d4). In this way they leave behind the intermediate (μεταξύ) state (between ἀγνοία and ἐπιστήμη) of mere δόξα (5.478d5-12) in which the majority of the φιλοδόξοι<sup>474</sup> remain because they are attached to beautiful sensible particulars (5.476b4-8). They are in a new state of mind -φιλοσοφία. This epistemological state will presumably be, like δόξα, a μεταξύ state of mind. However, there is a crucial difference: the philosopher believes in the existence of the Forms and, thus, craves for and is enamoured of wisdom and knowledge (5.475b11-c8) in such a way that, motivated by this passion, he may approach beauty itself and contemplate it (5.476c2-d4). Correspondingly in the *Symposium* Eros is a μεταξύ in the sense of being a δαίμων and φιλόσοφος, i.e. not just an intermediate state between ἀμαθία and σοφία but actually an intermediary, i.e. a force which is able to take and link us to the god-like state of σοφία (see 202b1ff. and 204b1ff.). This philosophical state of mind may also be described from the point of view of its cognitive contents as ὁρθὴ δόξα.<sup>475</sup>

This ability to distinguish what unites and is common to multiple things is fundamentally gained by the future philosopher-rulers through the study of the mathematical sciences -arithmetic (7.522c5-526c7), geometry (7.526c8-527c11), stereometry (7.528a6-e2), astronomy (7.527d1-a5; 7.528e3-530c4) and harmonics (7.530c4-531c8)- according to a specific method -i.e. correctly (ὁρθῶς, *Symp.*210a2).<sup>476</sup> Thus this kind of learning helps the soul to move away from visible, concrete instances, working with reason in its search for what is beautiful and good (see 7.531c6-7). Simultaneously these “beautiful” sciences provide foundations for the rest of the arts (τέχναι) (7.522c5-9) that deal with the world

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<sup>474</sup> 6.480a6.

<sup>475</sup> See *Symp.* 202a1-10; also Rowe (2001), Sier and here **Chapter 1, 3.2.1.4.** a) Eros is μεταξύ like the ὁρθὴ δόξα (202a), pp. 52 ff.

of generation, i.e. the kind of artistic production with which the guardians were in contact during their earlier education. The final result of this phase of education will evidently be the attainment of an understanding of the unity and connection of all these sciences (7.531c9-d4) and the comprehension of a beauty different from and higher than the visible one (as is clear in the case of astronomy, see 7.529c7-d1).

### **2.3. Final step of higher education: contemplation of Beauty and the Good**

There is more or less unanimous agreement about the coincidence between the final step of the erotic ascent of the *Symposium* –the contemplation of Beauty itself- and the contemplation of the Good by the dialectician, represented in the *Republic* in the image of the line as the released prisoner gazing at the sun in the allegory of the cave, and understanding reality on the basis of a principle which does not require further foundations. However, it is necessary to emphasize that neither text is a simple repetition of the other and that we in fact need the *Republic* once again in order to clarify what in the *Symposium* remains unexplained.

As shown above, Socrates deliberately puts his reflections about Eros into the mouth of the enigmatic figure of a wise priestess Diotima in such a way that the understanding of what Eros/ἔρως truly is (i.e. a φιλόσοφος) and especially of his maximum development through the erotic ascent is presented as a mystery to which only few people are able to gain access.<sup>477</sup> Moreover, although Beauty itself is extensively characterized as independent, in its beauty, of the limitations which its instantiations presuppose, the access to the Beautiful itself, if, in fact, someone ever happened to attain this kind of knowledge, is described as a revelation of something outstanding, glorious (210e4-5) and divine (211e3), which surpasses

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<sup>476</sup> See Chapter 2, Section III, 2.3. Maximum development of reason's stream through the programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectic: being a fully-developed philosopher or lover of the truth, pp. 223 ff..

<sup>477</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.1. Diotima as Socrates' mask, pp. 44 ff..



anything achieved at the previous stages but whose exact nature is not determined. What exactly Beauty itself is supposed to be, what its relation to the previous levels of beauty is and why what is really good for us and is universally desired -i.e. true virtue- is achieved through procreation in it stays as a veiled secret for the reader as well as for the fictional audience.<sup>478</sup>

Although only the personal experience of making the whole dialectical journey could provide definite knowledge about what kind of thing might happen if we ever contemplated the Beautiful itself, the *Republic* gives us some keys for understanding this mystery. Here Socrates, being in different fictional circumstances from the convivial situation of the *Symposium*, has more to say and makes more detailed developments.<sup>479</sup> After being trained through the programme of earlier education and studies in mathematical sciences, the dialectician strives after the discovery of an ἀνυπόθετος ἀρχή, an ἀρχή of a kind that does not need further foundations and simultaneously provides appropriate grounds for the previous levels of understanding. This kind of principle is the Good which, like the sun, is cause of existence (*Rep.* 6.509b6-10) and understanding (*Rep.* 6.508d4-e6) as well as ethical principle, insofar as it is the metaphysical foundation of the individual and social good (*Rep.* 6.504c9-505a4, see especially *Rep.* 505a2-4). If, as shown above, the first three stages of the *scala amoris* of the *Symposium* clearly sketched the primary and the mathematical education of the philosopher-rulers, the moment of access to Beauty itself has naturally to refer to finding something like an ἀνυπόθετος ἀρχή. As seen above, the beautiful in the *Symposium* must be an aspect of the good and, in fact, the *Republic* suggests that to contemplate the reality of the Good is also to contemplate what Beauty and Justice more authentically are (διὰ τὸ τάληθῇ ἑωρακέναι καλῶν τε καὶ δικαίων καὶ ἀγαθῶν περὶ, 7.520c5-6), the Good surpassing in knowledge and the truth in

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<sup>478</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.4.3.1. The Idea of Beauty itself, pp. 75 ff..

<sup>479</sup> See Chapter 2, Section III, 2.3. Maximum development of reason's stream through the programme of higher education in mathematics and dialectic: being a fully-developed philosopher or lover of the truth, pp. 223 ff..

beauty (ἀμήχανον κάλλος... εἰ ἐπιστήμην μὲν καὶ ἀλήθειαν παρέχει, αὐτὸ δ' ὑπὲρ ταῦτα κάλλει ἐστίν, 6.509a6-7). So the contemplation of Beauty itself in the *Symposium* -contemplation achieved through the steps of the erotic ascent which are a sketch of the programme of earlier and higher education- will imply the discovery of something like the Good and also be both ontological principle, making all things beautiful beautiful, and also gnoseological principle, explaining why beautiful things are beautiful. In this way the description of Beauty itself can be reinterpreted so that it becomes independent of its instances, not simply by being what is common to them -like an Aristotelian universal- but more precisely as being their cause of existence and so ontologically superior to them. This also explains the need of the previous erotic stages as toils necessary for arriving at this final phase: an experience of being in actual contact with this kind of principle is not easily available but requires a sustained effort through a whole life, if we are to understand the beauty and perfection firstly of cultural activities and then of the mathematical sciences, so that we may finally attain a comprehension of what makes everything beautiful and perfect. The *Republic* also brings some light to the connection between procreation in beauty and attainment of the real good universally desired, as well to the specific relationship between contemplation of Beauty itself and procreation of true virtue suggested in the *Symposium*. Wherever we feel attracted to beauty and desire to procreate in it, we in some way approach, through this attraction, what we all desire -the real good-, as beauty is an aspect of the good. If, motivated by this erotic desire for beauty, we are appropriately directed to erotic matters and ever contemplate Beauty itself and procreate out of inspiration from it, our deeds would be authentically virtuous and good as they will be founded on knowledge of the Good, this wisdom being the only means to full and sustained achievement of the other virtues such as courage, moderation and justice at an individual and at a political level.<sup>480</sup> Thus, a human being, when procreating true virtue in Beauty itself, would attain, as far as possible, the real good universally desired.

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<sup>480</sup> See Chapter 2, Section III, 2.3. Coincidence of the just man and the lover of the truth foundations of individual and social good on the Good, pp. 227 ff..

### 3. Consummation of the desire for the truth: a god-like immortality for the philosopher in life and after death

Lastly, we can use Book 10 of the *Republic* to solve another puzzle in the *Symposium*: that passage at at *Symp.* 212a5-7 about the god-like immortality attainable by the philosopher.<sup>481</sup>

As already shown,<sup>482</sup> Socrates/Diotima fundamentally refers to *a sort of* immortality in life which comes from leaving behind some kind of production through which a person can go on existing vicariously. This immortality has basically two forms: biological procreation, i.e. generating a living creature similar to oneself so that continuation of the species is achieved; and cultural procreation, i.e. producing works of art or virtuous deeds through which immortal fame and survival in the memory of others is achieved. Immortality by procreation of a higher range of importance -procreation of true virtue and not just of “images” of it- is open to the philosopher who has completed the whole dialectical journey insofar as, being in contact with Beauty itself and so having knowledge of the Good, he becomes the only person able, continuously and knowingly, to produce acts of authentic virtue.<sup>483</sup> In this way he becomes as close as is possible for a human being to the permanent possession of the real good which is universally desired. Nevertheless, all these forms of immortality through procreation - including the procreation of true virtue that is available to the philosopher- fall short insofar as what everybody desires is to possess the good *for ever* and, alongside it, a god-like immortality after death (i.e. being like the gods always

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<sup>481</sup> On this same line of interpretation see O'Brien (1984), pp.198-202. He compares *Symp.* 212a2-7 with *Republic* 10 (especially 612e8-614a8; 621c) and heroic mythology.

<sup>482</sup> See above **Chapter 1, 3.3.3.2. Different ways of attaining vicarious immortality and, alongside it, a certain possession of the good: procreation κατὰ τὸ σῶμα and procreation κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν**, pp. 66 ff..

<sup>483</sup> For a similar interpretation see ch. 18 of Irwin (1995), pp. 298-317.

absolutely the same, which is, of course, impossible for human beings), which will guarantee this eternal possession of the good. This possibility, hinted at for the philosopher at *Symp.* 212a5-7, is more extensively explained in Book 10 of the *Republic*.<sup>484</sup>

As seen above, the eschatological myth of *Republic* 10 deals with the immortal destiny of the soul according to its justice or injustice and the development or lack of development of its desire for the truth during its last incarnate life.<sup>485</sup> In accordance with the theory of periodical reincarnation used in the myth the immortality of the soul is presented not simply as some kind of existence after death but as a continuous existence through successive states of disembodiment and reincarnation inscribed in the cosmic justice of a mathematically organized universe. The thousand-year punishments or rewards of the soul in its discarnate condition depend on the justice or injustice of its previous life. The choice by the soul of its new incarnate life is determined by the development of its desire for truth and knowledge of the Good. Thus, people who have been philosophers and attained as much knowledge as they could of the Good and so possession of the good, are not only rewarded with a thousand years of delights of celestial happiness in their discarnate existence (like those human beings who have accidentally had a virtuous sort of life): afterwards, they will also rightly choose a just kind of life, given that they have knowledge of the Good. In consequence, they are the only ones who can achieve the maximum continuous possession of the real good available to a human being.

In addition to this, as I have tried to show above,<sup>486</sup> the myth of Book 10 also admits of a synchronic interpretation according to which the story of Er would

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<sup>484</sup> See Chapter 1, 3.4.3.3. The Idea of Beauty as ethical principle: wisdom and virtue, pp. 79 ff. and 3.4.3.5. Immortality through procreation in Beauty and eschatological godlike immortality for the philosopher, pp. 83 ff..

<sup>485</sup> See Chapter 2, Section IV: The eschatological myth of *Republic* 10, pp. 233 ff..

<sup>486</sup> See Chapter 2, Section IV, 2.3.2. Synchronic understanding of the myth: temporary achievement now and here of a god-like condition, pp. 254 ff..

also be hinting at the possibility of temporarily attaining some kind of divine immortality in life if the lover of truth accesses the knowledge of the Good. The *Symposium* would encourage this interpretation insofar as it suggests that the philosopher, by developing his desire for the truth and the real good, achieves in this life *a sort of* god-like immortality which consists in constant procreation, in Beauty, of true virtue and thus, in a way, possesses the good universally desired. But in addition to this, according to the eschatological myth of the *Republic*, his god-like incarnate life as a philosopher allows him to hope that not only through his embodied but also in his disembodied existence, he might be able to partake like the gods in a permanent ownership of the good for the whole of eternity. All this, provided that he continues choosing a philosophical way of life, albeit with the unavoidable limitations of his human condition.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> According to some interpreters the *Phaedo* would also refer to the 'death' of the philosopher in two different ways –the actual/real death, with which he attains a permanent contact with the Forms, and also –and mainly- to an 'initiatory' death in life (see Eggers Lan (1989), p. 28).

## EPILOGUE

Here I have limited my argument about Plato's theory of desire to the *Symposium* and the *Republic*. Nevertheless, I think that a similar approach could also be applicable to other dialogues. The *Phaedo*, for example, has more to say in relation to different kinds of immortality available to us according to what we have devoted ourselves to, particularly focusing on the god-like immortality open to the philosopher as a result of the development of his desire for truth. As for the *Phaedrus*, the myth of the winged-soul, though clearly referring to a *post-mortem*, discarnate existence of the soul in the framework of an ordered universe, is simultaneously an ethical allegory of our present condition and of what kind of Eros can lead our lives here and now. Thus, even more obviously than in the case of the eschatological myth of *Republic* 10, a diachronic and synchronic understanding of this myth of the *Phaedrus* seems to be appropriate.

I hope that I will be able to give further development to these lines of interpretation in my future research.

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